Ancient Remedies Revived

A Complete Guide to
Herbal Medicine and Natural Healing

SHANON GREEF & NATALIE WILLOW

ANCIENT REMEDIES REVIVED

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO HERBAL MEDICINE AND NATURAL HEALING

SHANON GREEF
NATALIE WILLOW

Copyright © GreenHaven Press 2024 - All rights reserved

The content contained within this book may not be reproduced, duplicated or transmitted without direct written permission from the author or the publisher.
Under no circumstances will any blame or legal responsibility be held against the publisher, or author, for any damages, reparation, or monetary loss due to the information contained within this book. Either directly or indirectly. You are responsible for your own choices, actions, and results.

Legal Notice: This book is copyright protected. This book is only for personal use. You cannot amend, distribute, sell, use, quote or paraphrase any part, or the content within this book, without the consent of the author or publisher.

Disclaimer Notice: Please note the information contained within this document is for educational and entertainment purposes only. All effort has been executed to present accurate, up to date, and reliable, complete information. No warranties of any kind are declared or implied. Readers acknowledge that the author is not engaging in the rendering of legal, financial, medical or professional advice. The content within this book has been derived from various sources. Please consult a licensed professional before attempting any techniques outlined in this book.

This book is intended for educational and informational purposes only. It is not a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. While herbal remedies can be effective in promoting healing and improving overall health, they may also carry risks and side effects. Many herbal medications may have drug interactions. It is important to exercise caution and consult a healthcare professional, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, have a chronic medical condition, or are taking any medications. Do not use herbal remedies to self-diagnose or self-treat serious or life-threatening conditions. Call 911 or seek immediate medical attention if you have a medical emergency. The authors and publishers of this book assume no liability for any adverse effects resulting from the use of the information contained within. Please use herbal remedies responsibly and with caution.

By reading this document, the reader agrees that under no circumstances is the author responsible for any losses, direct or indirect, which are incurred as a result of the use of the information contained within this document, including, but not limited to, errors, omissions, or inaccuracies.w

About The Author

Shanon Greef is a modern herbalist, a mother, a scuba diver, and a marine ecologist.

She earned her Certification of Advanced Herbalism in South Africa, complemented by a Diploma in Health and Safety.

Her remarkable journey began after a devastating diagnosis of melanoma, and with its size, she was given a mere six months to live.

Following multiple surgeries and experiencing the doctors being proven wrong twice within a few months, she decided to take control of her own destiny.

Embracing alternative healing methods, she explored the power of herbs, natural medicinal practices, and meditation.

She pursued her dreams and did everything she wanted— from fire dancing to scuba diving—and realized the profound truth that one's life is their own, immune to the limitations imposed by others.

This newfound perspective led her to embark on a learning journey, exploring herbalism, foraging, and even marine ecology.

Empowered by her experiences, she adopted a natural approach to healthcare, relying on homemade remedies and a deep understanding of herbs and their healing properties.

Nineteen years later, she now dedicates herself to sharing her wisdom and experiences through writing, aiming to guide others toward a holistic and empowered lifestyle.

With a rich background in indigenous recipes and an innate understanding of the power of nature, Shanon spreads her knowledge, as well as selling her own unique concoctions.

Dedicated to my husband Gary
and my boys Richard, Matthew, Aidan and Storm,
and all my friends who all are "quite " willing to be my guinea pigs
for all my weird and wonderful concoctions.

How to Use This Book

Ancient Remedies Revived is a comprehensive guide to harnessing the timeless wisdom of medicinal herbs. This book is designed to be a valuable resource for anyone interested in natural health, whether you are a beginner or an experienced herbal enthusiast. Here's how to make the most of this book:

Understanding the Structure

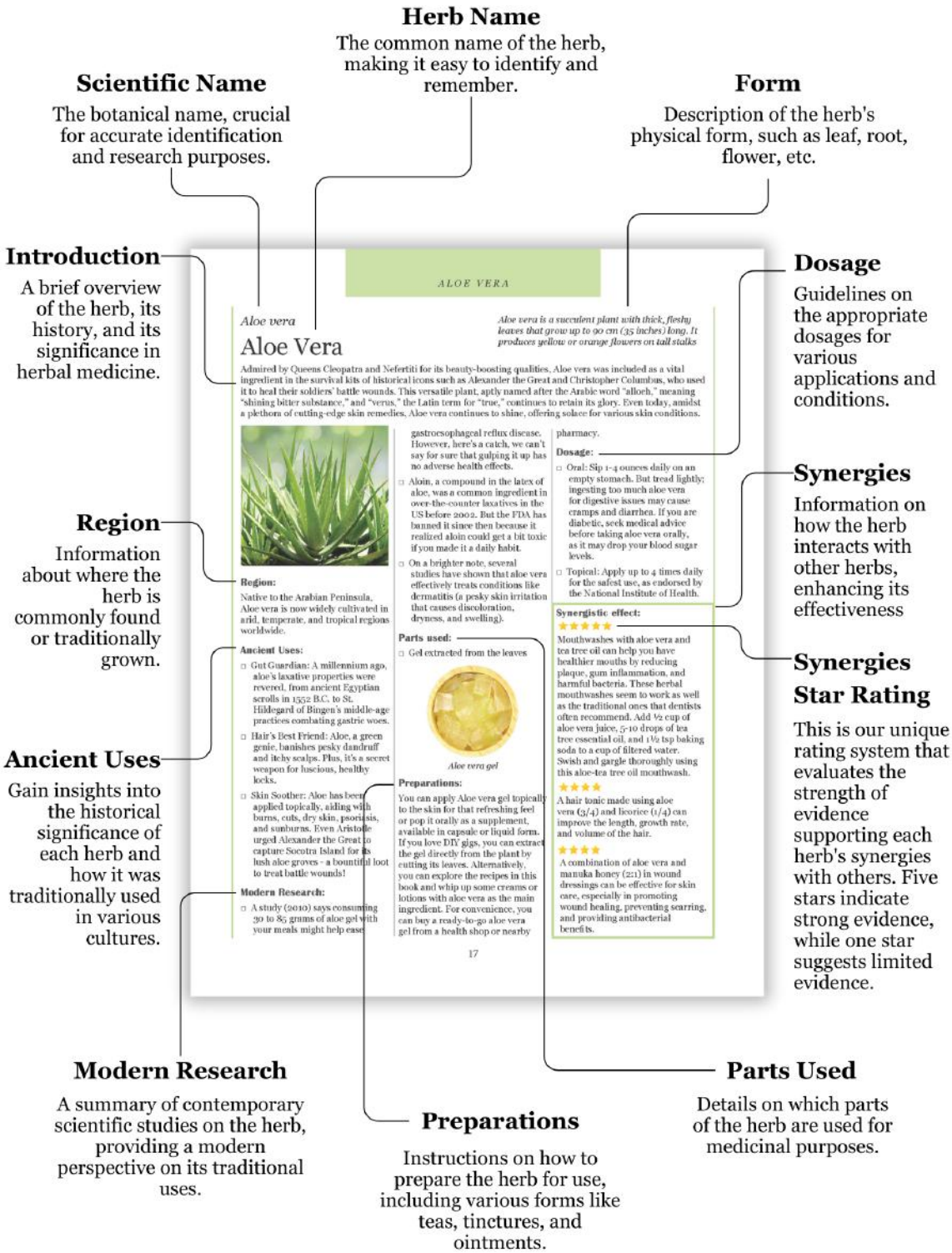
1. Medicinal Herb Facts: This chapter provides detailed profiles of various medicinal herbs. Each profile includes the herb's history, medicinal properties, active components, and contraindications. Utilize this chapter to familiarize yourself with the herbs and understand their health benefits.
2. Herbal Recipes: Here, you'll find a collection of recipes that incorporate these medicinal herbs. These recipes range from simple teas and tinctures to more complex preparations. Each recipe includes step-by-step instructions, dosage recommendations, and tips for best practices.
3. Growing Information: For those interested in cultivating their own herbs, this chapter offers practical information on growing and harvesting herbs. It includes information on soil types, plant spacing, hardiness zones, and sunlight requirements.

Making the Most of This Book

- Start with an Herb: If you're new to herbal remedies, start by focusing on one herb. Read its profile, try a recipe, and if you're inclined, attempt growing it.
- Cross-Reference for Ailments: Use the index to find herbs and recipes that are beneficial for specific health concerns.
- Experiment with Recipes: Feel free to modify the recipes to suit your taste or the ingredients you have on hand.
- Keep a Journal: Document your experiences with different herbs and recipes. Note any changes in your health or well-being.
- Safety First: Always consult with a healthcare professional before starting any new health regimen, especially if you have existing health conditions or are taking medications.

Navigating the Herb Profile Pages

Each herb profile page is designed for easy navigation and understanding. It's presented with detailed information that is structured with the following sections:


Herb Name
The common name of the herb, making it easy to identify and remember.
Scientific Name
The botanical name, crucial for accurate identification and research purposes.
Form
Description of the herb's physical form, such as leaf, root, flower, etc.
Introduction
A brief overview of the herb, its history, and its significance in herbal medicine.
Dosage
Guidelines on the appropriate dosages for various applications and conditions.
Region
Information about where the herb is commonly found or traditionally grown.
Synergies
Information on how the herb interacts with other herbs, enhancing its effectiveness
Ancient Uses
Gain insights into the historical significance of each herb and how it was traditionally used in various cultures.
Synergies Star Rating
This is our unique rating system that evaluates the strength of evidence supporting each herb's synergies with others. Five stars indicate strong evidence, while one star suggests limited evidence.
ALOE VERA
Aloe vera
Aloe Vera
Aloe vera is a succulent plant with thick, fleshy leaves that grow up to 90 cm (35 inches) long. It produces yellow or orange flowers on tall stalks
Admired by Queens Cleopatra and Nefertiti for its beauty-boosting qualities, Aloe vera was included as a vital ingredient in the survival kits of historical icons such as Alexander the Great and Christopher Columbus, who used it to heal their soldiers' battle wounds. This versatile plant, aptly named after the Arabic word "alloeh," meaning "shining bitter substance," and "vera," the Latin term for "true," continues to retain its glory. Even today, amidst a plethora of cutting-edge skin remedies, Aloe vera continues to shine, offering solace for various skin conditions.
Region:
Native to the Arabian Peninsula, Aloe vera is now widely cultivated in arid, temperate, and tropical regions worldwide.
Ancient Uses:
Gut Guardian: A millennium ago, aloe's laxative properties were revered, from ancient Egyptian scrolls in 1552 B.C. to St. Hildegard of Bingen's middle-age practices combating gastric woes.
Hair's Best Friend: Aloe, a green genie, banishes pesky dandruff and itchy scalps. Plus, it's a secret weapon for luscious, healthy locks.
Skin Soother: Aloe has been applied topically, aiding with burns, cuts, dry skin, psoriasis, and sunburns. Even Aristotle urged Alexander the Great to capture Socotra Island for its lush aloe groves - a bountiful loot to treat battle wounds!
Modern Research:
A study (2010) says consuming 30 to 85 grams of aloe gel with your meals might help ease gastroesophageal reflux disease. However, here's a catch, we can't say for sure that gulping it up has no adverse health effects.
Aloin, a compound in the latex of aloe, was a common ingredient in over-the-counter laxatives in the US before 2002. But the FDA has banned it since then because it realized aloin could get a bit toxic if you made it a daily habit.
On a brighter note, several studies have shown that aloe vera effectively treats conditions like dermatitis (a pesky skin irritation that causes discoloration, dryness, and swelling).
Parts used:
Gel extracted from the leaves
Aloe vera gel
Preparations:
You can apply Aloe vera gel topically to the skin for that refreshing feel or pop it orally as a supplement, available in capsule or liquid form. If you love DIY gigs, you can extract the gel directly from the plant by cutting its leaves. Alternatively, you can explore the recipes in this book and whip up some creams or lotions with aloe vera as the main ingredient. For convenience, you can buy a ready-to-go aloe vera gel from a health shop or nearby pharmacy.
Dosage:
Oral: Sip 1-4 ounces daily on an empty stomach. But tread lightly; ingesting too much aloe vera for digestive issues may cause cramps and diarrhea. If you are diabetic, seek medical advice before taking aloe vera orally, as it may drop your blood sugar levels.
Topical: Apply up to 4 times daily for the safest use, as endorsed by the National Institute of Health.
Synergistic effect:
Mouthwashes with aloe vera and tea tree oil can help you have healthier mouths by reducing plaque, gum inflammation, and harmful bacteria. These herbal mouthwashes seem to work as well as the traditional ones that dentists often recommend. Add ½ cup of aloe vera juice, 5-10 drops of tea tree essential oil, and 1½ tsp baking soda to a cup of filtered water. Swish and gargle thoroughly using this aloe-tea tree oil mouthwash.
A hair tonic made using aloe vera (3/4) and licorice (1/4) can improve the length, growth rate, and volume of the hair.
A combination of aloe vera and manuka honey (2:1) in wound dressings can be effective for skin care, especially in promoting wound healing, preventing scarring, and providing antibacterial benefits.
17
Modern Research
A summary of contemporary scientific studies on the herb, providing a modern perspective on its traditional uses.
Preparations
Instructions on how to prepare the herb for use, including various forms like teas, tinctures, and ointments.
Parts Used
Details on which parts of the herb are used for medicinal purposes.

Contents

About The Author iii

How to Use This Book iv

Understanding the Structure iv

Making the Most of This Book iv

Navigating the Herb Profile Pages v

About This Book 2

Herbal Medicine Vs. Traditional Medicine 3

All About Herbal Medicines 3

Medicines Side By Side: A Comparison . 4

Working With The Body 5

Sourcing Herbs 5

Why You Should Grow Medicinal Herbs . 6

Ancient Civilizations 7

A Brief History of Herbal Medicine 7

The Middle Ages 8

The Modern Era 9

Drying Herbs 10

How To Prepare Herbal Remedies 10

What's The Best Way To Take A Herb? . 11

Infusion 11

Decoction 12

Tincture 12

Ointment 13

Poultice 14

Syrup 14

Capsules 14

Essential Oils 15

Hydrosols 15

Medicinal Herbs Facts 17

Almond 18

Aloe Vera 19

Anise 20

Apple Cider Vinegar 21

Arnica 22

Arugula 23

Ashwagandha 24

Asparagus 25

Astragalus 26

Avocado 27

Balsamic Vinegar 28

Basil 29

Bay Laurel 30

Bee Balm 31

Beet 32

Bilberry 33

Black Cohosh 34

Black Lentils 35

Black Pepper 36

Black Seeds 37

Blueberry 38

Boswellia 39

Brazil Nut 40

Broccoli 41

Burdock 42

Butcher's Broom 43

Butterfly Pea 44

Calamus 45

Calendula 46

Caraway 47

Cardamom 48

Cascara sagrada 49

Cat's claw 50

Cauliflower 51

Cayenne pepper 52

Celery seed 53

Chamomile 54

Cherry 55
Chia Seeds 56
Cinnamon 57
Clove 58
Coconut Oil 59
Coffee 60
Comfrey 61
Corn, Yu Mi Shu 62
Cramp bark 63
Cranberry 64
Cumin 65
Dandelion 66
Dark Chocolate 67
Deadly Nightshade 68
Devil's Claw 69
Dong Quai 70
Dried Rose, Rose Petals 71
Echinacea 72
Elderflower 73
Elecampane 74
Ephedra, Ma Huang 75
Eucalyptus 76
Evening Primrose 77
Fennel 78
Fenugreek 79
Feverfew 80
Flaxseed 81
Galangal 82
Garlic 83
Gentian 84
Ginger 85
Ginkgo biloba 86
Ginseng, Ren Shen 87
Goji Berry 88
Goldenseal 89
Gotu Kola 90
Grapes 91
Green Tea 92
Hawthorn 93
Hemp Seeds 94
Holy basil 95
Hops 96
Horehound 97
Horse Chestnut 98
Horseradish 99
Hyssop 100
Indian Sandalwood 101
Juniper Berry 102
Kava 103
Kefir 104
Kombucha 105
Kudzu 106
Lavender 107
Lemon 108
Lemon balm 109
Lemongrass 110
Licorice 111
Lime 112
Linden Flower 113
Lion's Mane Mushroom 114
Lobelia 115
Maca 116
Macadamia Nuts 117
Marshmallow 118
Milk thistle 119
Moringa 120
Motherwort 121
Mugwort 122
Mullein 123
Mustard 124

Myrrh 125
Neem 126
Nettle 127
Nutmeg 128
Olive Oil 129
Onion 130
Oregano 131
Passionflower 132
Peppermint 133
Pineapple 134
Plantain 135
Pomegranate 136
Psyllium 137
Purslane 138
Raspberries 139
Raw Honey 140
Red clover 141
Reishi mushroom 142
Rhodiola rosea 143
Rooibos 144
Roselle 145
Rosemary 146
Saffron 147
Sage. 148
Sarsaparilla 149
Saw Palmetto. 150
Senna 151
Shallot. 152
Shiitake and MaitakeMushrooms . . . 153
Skullcap 154
Slippery Elm 155
Spirulina. 156
St. John's wort 157
Strawberry 158
Sumac 159
Sunflower Seeds 160
Tea Tree 161
Thyme. 162
Tribulus Terrestris 163
Turkey Tail Mushroom 164
Turmeric 165
Uva Ursi 166
Valerian 167
Vervain 168
Visnaga 169
Walnut 170
Watercress 171
White Peony 172
White willow 173
Wild Yam 174
Witch Hazel 175
Wormwood 176
Yarrow 177
Yogurt. 178
Yucca 179
Activated Charcoal 180
African Wormwood 180
Amargo, Bitter-wood 180
Andrographis 181
Annatto 181
Arjun 182
Asthma Plant. 182
Baobab 183
Barberry 183
Boldo 184
Borage. 184
Brahmi 184
Buchu 185
Bupleurum. 185
California Poppy 186

Castor Bean 186
Chasteberry 187
Chervil 187
Chickweed 187
Chinese Rhubarb 188
Cinchona 188
Codonopsis, Dang Shen 189
Coleus 189
Common Hepatica, Liverwort 190
Cornflower 190
Corydalis 191
Damiana 191
Dan Shen, Chinese Sage 192
Diatomaceous Earth 192
Dill 192
Epazote 193
Epsom Salts 193
Fo Ti, He Shou Wu 194
Foxglove 194
Fumitory 195
Ground Ivy 195
Guggul 196
Henbane 196
Honeybush 197
Horsetail 197
Jamaica Dogwood 198
Jasmine 198
Ju Hua, Florists' Chrysanthemum . . . 199
Laurustinus 199
Leonotis, Lion's Ear 200
Meadowsweet 200
Mistletoe 201
Noni 201
Pau d'Arco 202
Pelargonium, Umckaloabo 202
Platycodon, Balloon Flower 203
Prickly Ash, Toothache Tree 203
Rehmannia, Di Huang 204
Robert Geranium, Herb Robert 204
Schisandra 204
Sea Buckthorn 205
Shepherd's Purse 205
Siberian Ginseng, Eleuthero 206
Snowdrop 206
Sweet Annie, Qing Hao 207
Varuna, Barun, Three-leaved Caper . . 207
White Snakeroot 208
Wild Pansy 208
Yohimbe 209
Ziziphus, Jujube 209
Calcium 210
Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) 210
Fiber 210
Glucosamine and Chondroitin 211
Iron 211
Magnesium 212
Melatonin 212
Omega-3 Fatty Acids (Fish Oil) 213
Probiotics 213
Vitamin B12 213
Vitamin C 214
Vitamin D 214
Vitamin E 215
Zinc 215

Herbal Recipes 216

Easy 4-Step Dos and Don'ts of Creating Herbal Synergies 217

Shanon's Go-To Recipes 219
Backyard Painkiller 219
Plantain Poultice 220

Rosemary Memory-Boosting Tincture . 221
Herbal Haven: A Daily Blend of Thyme, Rosemary, Sage, and Peppermint . . . 222
Lemon/Orange Peel Tincture. 223
Herbal Tea for Arthritis and Joint Pain 223
Ashwagandha Herbal Tea 224
Usnea Tincture Recipe. 225
Liver Restoration Tonic 226
Echinacea Cold and Flu Remedy . . . 227
Lemon Balm and Chamomile Stress Relief Tea 227
Feverfew and Willow Bark Headache Tincture 228
Immune-Boosting Elderberry Syrup. . 229
Immune-Boosting Elderberry Gummies 230
Anti-Inflammatory Turmeric and Ginger Capsules. 230
Peppermint and Fennel Digestive Aid Tea 231
Anti-Anxiety Tincture 231
Arnica and Comfrey Bruise Cream . . 232
Aloe Vera Sunburn Soother Gel 233
Anise and Caraway Digestive Tea . . . 233
Ashwagandha and Holy Basil Anti-Stress Tincture 234
Cascara Sagrada and Dandelion Laxative Tea 234
Cat's Claw and Boswellia Joint Support Capsules. 235
Thyme and Mullein Respiratory Support Tea 235
Eucalyptus and Peppermint Chest Rub 236
Garlic and Ginger Blood Pressure Support Tincture 236
Turmeric and Astragalus Immune Boosting Tonic 237
Ashwagandha and Reishi Mushroom Anti-cancer Tincture. 237
Milk Thistle and Dandelion Liver Detox Tincture 238
Turmeric and Ginger Detox Tea. . . . 238
Calendula and Comfrey Bruise and Wound Salve 239
Hawthorn and Lime Leaf Heart Tonic Tea 239
Calendula and Chamomile Healing Salve 240
Aloe Vera and Tea Tree Acne Treatment Gel 240
Maca and Ashwagandha Hormonal Balance Capsules. 241
Vitex and Black Cohosh Menopause Support Tincture 241
Sunrise Elixir: Herbal Tincture for Energy and Wellbeing 242
Mystic Moonlight: A Soothing Herbal Tincture for Restful Sleep 243
Emerald Resilience: A Revitalizing Herbal Tincture for Immune Support 243
Mystical Moonlit Chamomile Tea: A Tranquil Night's Elixir. 244
Healing Harmony Herbal Tea Blend. . 245
Spiced Serenity Herbal Tea Blend . . . 245
Tranquil Tropics Herbal Tea Blend . . 246
Soothing Whisper Herbal Balm 246
Revive and Restore Herbal Salve . . . 247
Healing Harmony Herbal Balm 248
Tranquil Blend Herbal Infusion. . . . 249
Vitality Boost: Energizing Herbal Fusion 249
Herbal Skin-Soother Salve 250
Muscle Relief Salve 251
Respiratory Relief Rub: Breathe Easy Salve 252
Historical Recipes 253
Egyptian Kyphi 254
Hippocras 255
The Ancient Roots of Chinese Tea and

Ginseng 256
Four Gentlemen Decoction 257
Turmeric Golden Milk 258
Ancient Indian Neem Mouthwash . . . 259
Mayan Cacao Elixir 259
Ancient Mayan Achiote Balm 260
Native American Slippery Elm Cough Syrup 261
Ancient Roman Mustard Plaster . . . 262
Norse Yarrow Ale 262
Avicenna's Rosewater 263
Four Thieves Vinegar 264
Middle Eastern Za'atar Blend 265
Digestive Bitters 265
Mullein Ear Oil 266
Willow Bark Pain Relief 267
Medieval Wart Remedy 267
Roman Rose, Honey, and Almond Cleanser 268
Egyptian Aloe and Sesame Oil Lotion . 268
Readers' Comments 269

Disease Index

Cardiovascular Health

- □ **Blood Circulation Problems:** Bilberry (33), Butterfly Pea (44), Cayenne Pepper (52), Chervil (187), Dark Chocolate (67), Ginkgo Biloba (86), Hawthorn (93), Linden Flower (113), Mayan Cacao (259), Muscle Relief Salve (251), Mustard (124), Watercress (171)
- □ **Blood Health:** Rehmannia (204)
- □ **Blood Lipid Level Reduction:** Holy Basil (95)
- □ **Blood Vessel Issues:** Cayenne (52)
- □ **Cardiovascular Disease:** Almond (18), Avocado (27), Beets (32), Corn (Yu Mi Shu) (62), Garlic (83), Hawthorn (93), Pineapple (134), Rooibos (144), Saffron (147), Shallot (152), Tribulus Terrestris (163)
- □ **Chest Pain:** Lemon Balm (109)
- □ **Cholesterol Management:** Lion's Mane Mushrooms (114), Psyllium (137)
- □ **Congestive Heart Failure:** Annatto (181), Borage (184), Coleus (189), Corydalis (191), Foxglove (194), Guggul (196), Linden flower (113), Wild Pansy (208)
- □ **Fever:** Black Pepper (36), Yarrow (177)
- □ **Heart Health:** Almond (18), Calcium (210), Cauliflower (51), Coconut Oil (59), Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) (210), Dark Chocolate (67), Garlic (83), Grapes (91), Hawthorn (93), Hemp Seeds (94), Holy Basil (95), Kava (103), Macadamia Nuts (117), Magnesium (212), Olive Oil - Extra Virgin (EVOO) (129), Omega-3 Fatty Acids (213), Onion (130), Pineapple (134), Pomegranate (136), Sea Buckthorn (205), Shiitake and Maitake Mushrooms (153), Strawberry (158), Sumac (159), Sunflower Seeds (160), Walnuts (170)
- □ **Heart Palpitations:** Motherwort (121)
- □ **High Blood Pressure:** Beets (32), Chervil (187), Garlic (83), Hawthorn (93), Leonotis/lion's ear (200), Lime Leaf (239), Mistletoe (201), Nettle (127), Platycodon (203), Rhodiola Rosea (143), Roselle (145)
- □ **Low Blood Pressure:** Clove (58)

Immune System Health

- □ **Colds and Flu:** Cherry (55), Echinacea (72), Elderberry (229), Elderflower (73), Laurustinus (199), Mistletoe (201), Onion (130), Platycodon (203)
- □ **Common Cold and Flu:** Echinacea (72), Elderberry (229), Ginseng (87)
- □ **Immune Function Disorders:** Astragalus (26), Echinacea (72), Elderberry (229), Iron (211), Probiotics (213)
- □ **Immune System Enhancement:** Ashwagandha (24), Astragalus (26), Blueberries (38), Broccoli (41), Echinacea (72), Elderflower (73), Garlic (83), Ginseng (87), Goji Berry (88), Gummies (230), Holy Basil (95), Immune-Boosting Elderberry Syrup (229), Kefir (104), Kombucha (105), Kudzu (106), Lemon (108), Lemongrass (110), Lion's Mane Mushrooms (114), Noni (201), Pelargonium (202), Pineapple (134), Raspberries (139), Raw Honey (140), Reishi Mushroom (142), Sea Buckthorn (205), Shallot (152), Shiitake and Maitake Mushrooms (153), Spirulina (156), Strawberry (158), Turmeric (165), Umckaloabo (202), Yogurt (178)
- □ **Immune System Weakness:** Reishi Mushroom (142)
- □ **Infections:** Buchu (185), Castor Bean (186), Cat's Claw (50), Codonopsis (189), Coleus (189), Echinacea (72), Epazote (193), Henbane (196), Horseradish (99), Myrrh (125), Pau d'Arco (202)
- □ **Weak Immune System:** Astragalus (26), Bay Laurel (30), Echinacea (72), Elderberry (229), Garlic (83), Goldenseal (89), Moringa (120)

Digestive and Gastrointestinal Health

- □ **Acid Reflux/Heartburn:** Licorice (111), Meadowsweet (200), Black Pepper (36), Cardamom (48), Lime (112), Marshmallow (118), Psyllium (137)
- □ **Appetite Stimulation:** Dill (192), Four Gentlemen Decoction (257), Wormwood (176)
- □ **Bile Secretion Disorders:** Goldenseal (89)
- □ **Bloating and Flatulence:** Activated Charcoal (180), Caraway (47), Chamomile (54), Dried Rose (71), Elderflower (73), Fennel (78), Leonotis/lion's ear (200), Lime (112), Oregano (131), Pelargonium (202), Peppermint and Fennel (Digestive Aid Tea) (231), Rooibos (144), Turkey Tail Mushrooms (164), Umckaloabo (202)
- □ **Bowel Irregularity:** Chia Seeds (56), Psyllium (137)
- □ **Colon Health:** Astragalus (26)
- □ **Constipation:** Calendula (46), Cascara Sagrada (234), Cherry (55), Chinese Rhubarb (188), Dandelion (66), Dried Rose (71), Fennel (78), Flaxseed (81), Gentian (84), Ginger (85), Peppermint (133), Psyllium (137), Raspberries (139), Watercress (171)
- □ **Cramping and Stomach Pains:** Calendula (46),

Common Hepatica (190), Dill (192), Feverfew (80)

- □ **Diarrhea:** Anise (20), Annatto (181), Bilberry (33), Black Pepper (36), Buchu (185), Celery seed (53), Cinnamon (57), Fennel (78), Goldenseal (89), Kudzu (106), Oregano (131), Pineapple (134), Witch Hazel (175)
- □ **Digestive Disorders and Indigestion:** Anti-Inflammatory Turmeric and Ginger Capsules (230), Apple Cider Vinegar (21), Arugula (23), Balsamic Vinegar (28), Black Lentils (35), Broccoli (41), Cherry (55), Corn (62), Gentian (84), Goldenseal (89), Hemp Seeds (94), Hawthorn (93), Kefir (104), Norse Yarrow Ale (262), Peppermint and Fennel (Digestive Aid Tea) (231), Pomegranate (136), Shallot (152), Spirulina (156), Strawberry (158), Sunflower Seeds (160), Yogurt (178), Aloe Vera (19), Anise (20), Basil (29), Barberry (183), Bay Laurel (30), Bee Balm (31), Bilberry (33), Black Pepper (36), Black Seeds (37), Borage (184), Burdock (42), Calamus (45), Calendula (46), Cardamom (48), Cat's Claw (50), Cayenne pepper (52), Celery seed (53), Chamomile (54), Chickweed (187), Chia Seeds (56), Chinese Rhubarb (188), Cinchona (188), Cinnamon (57), Clove (58), Coffee (60), Common Hepatica (190), Cornflower (190), Cramp Bark (63), Cranberry (64), Cumin (65), Devil's Claw (69), Diatomaceous Earth (192), Digestive Bitters (265), Dill (192), Elderflower (73), Epazote (193), Fennel (78), Feverfew (80), Flaxseed (81), Four Gentlemen Decoction (257), Fumitory (195), Ginger (85), Hemp Seeds (94), Holy Basil (95),Hops (96), Horseradish (99), Horehound (97), Hyssop (100), Jasmine (198), Juniper Berry (102), Kefir (104), Kudzu (106), Lavender (107), Lemon (108), Leonotis/lion's ear (200), Licorice (111), Linden Flower (113), Linden flower (113), Marshmallow (118), Meadowsweet (200), Milk Thistle (119), Mugwort (122), Mustard (124), Neem (126), Noni (201), Norse Yarrow Ale (262), Nutmeg (128), Oregano (131), Pau d'Arco (202), Peppermint and Fennel (Digestive Aid Tea) (231), Pelargonium (202),Pomegranate (136), Probiotics (213), Psyllium (137), Raw Honey (140), Rosemary (146), Sarsaparilla (149), Sea Buckthorn (205), Shallot (152), Snowdrop (206), Spirulina (156),Strawberry (158), Sunflower Seeds (160), Turmeric (165), Watercress (171), Wild Pansy (208), Witch Hazel (175), Wormwood (176), Yarrow (177), Yohimbe (Pausinystalia yohimbe) (209), Yogurt (178)
- □ **Dysentery:** Cat's Claw (50)
- □ **Functional Dyspepsia:** Caraway (47)
- □ **Gastritis:** Goldenseal (89)
- □ **Gut Health:** Cranberry (64), Fiber (210), Milk Thistle (119), Probiotics (213)
- □ **Inflammatory Bowel Disease:** Caraway (47), Fennel (78), Guggul (196).
- □ **Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS):** Cardamom (48)
- □ **Loose Stools:** Four Gentlemen Decoction (257)
- □ **Motion Sickness/Nausea:** Ginger (85), Dill (192), Kudzu (106),
- □ **Peptic/Stomach Ulcers:** Caraway (47), Cramp Bark (63), Goldenseal (89)
- □ **Stress-Related Stomach Injuries:** Gentian (84)
- □ **Vomiting:** Horehound (97), Oregano (131)

Liver and Gallbladder Health

- □ **Acute Liver Failure Management:** Schisandra (204)
- □ **Gallbladder Health:** Chinese Rhubarb (188)
- □ **Gallbladder/Liver Disorders:** Cascara Sagrada (234), Coffee (60)
- □ **Hepatic Lipotoxicity:** Cramp Bark (63)
- □ **Hepatitis:** Annatto (181)
- □ **Liver Cirrhosis:** Cramp Bark (63)
- □ **Liver Disorders:** Pelargonium (202), Schisandra (204), Umckaloabo (202)
- □ **Liver Health:** Activated Charcoal (180),Barberry (183), Barun (207), Beets (32), Borage (184), Buchu (185), Chinese Rhubarb (188), Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) (210), Common Hepatica (190), Corydalis (191), Damiana (191), Dandelion (66), Dill (192), Foxglove (194), Fumitory (195), Goji Berry (88), Linden Flower (113), Milk Thistle (238), Rehmannia (204), Schisandra (204), Sea Buckthorn (205), Varuna (207)
- □ **Liver Inflammation:** Fo Ti (194)
- □ **Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD):** Cranberry (64), Ginseng (206)
- □ **Obesity-Related Liver Issues:** Dandelion (66)

Mental and Emotional Well-being

- □ **Alzheimer's and Cognitive Decline:** Arnica (22), California Poppy (186), Clove (58), Codonopsis (189), Garlic (83), Ginkgo Biloba (86), Lion's Mane Mushrooms (114), Passionflower (132), Schisandra (204), Varuna (207)
- □ **Anxiety:** Ashwagandha (24), Brahmi (184), Cat's Claw (235), Chamomile (54), Corydalis (191), Cramp Bark (63), Egyptian Kyphi (254), Hawthorn (93), Holy Basil (95), Hops (96), Indian Sandalwood (101), Jamaica dogwood (198), Kava (103), Lavender (107), Lemon Balm (109), Linden Flower (113), Mayan Cacao (259), Motherwort (121), Nutmeg (128), Passionflower (132), Reishi Mushroom (142), Rhodiola Rosea (143), Rosemary (146), Skullcap (154), Valerian (167)
- □ **Cognitive Health:** Brahmi (184), Chamomile (54),

Eucalyptus (76), Ginkgo Biloba (86), Gotu Kola (90), Green Tea (92), Lemon (108), Lemon Balm (109), Lion's Mane Mushrooms (114), Maca (116), Mayan Cacao (259), Middle Eastern Za'atar Blend (265), Mugwort (122), Rosemary (146), Sage (148), Schisandra (204)

- □ **Energy Boost:** Beets (32), Coffee (60), Kombucha (105), Maca (116), Mayan Cacao (259)
- □ **Headaches:** Lavender (107), Linden Flower (113)
- □ **Mental Fatigue:** Rhodiola Rosea (143)
- □ **Mood and Emotional Wellbeing:** Beets (32), Brahmi (184), Butterfly Pea (44), Celery Seed (53), Chamomile (54), Goldenseal (89), Jamaica Dogwood (198), Kombucha (105), Kudzu (106), Lemon (108), Linden Flower (113), Maca (116), Mayan Cacao (259), Motherwort (121)
- □ **Nervous System Disorders:** Kava (103), Lion's Mane Mushrooms (114), Rosemary (146), Sage (148), Skullcap (154)
- □ **Neurodegenerative Disorders:** Boswellia (39), Calamus (45), Henbane (196), Mistletoe (201), Passionflower (132)
- □ **Parkinson's Disease:** Passionflower (132), White Peony (172)
- □ **Sleep Disorders:** Chamomile (54), Egyptian Kyphi (254), Hops (96), Jamaica Dogwood (198), Kava (103), Lavender (107), Lemon Balm (109), Linden Flower (113), Mystic Moonlight Tincture (243), Mystic Moonlit Chamomile Tea (244), Passionflower (132), Valerian (167)
- □ **Stress Management and Reduction:** Fennel (78), Holy Basil (95), Lavender (107), Schisandra (204)

Metabolic and Endocrine Health

- □ **Blood Sugar Control:** Balsamic Vinegar (28), Bilberry (33), Celery Seed (53), Cranberry (64), Cramp Bark (63), Dandelion (66)
- □ **Blood Sugar Reduction:** Ephedra (75), Goji Berry (88), Gotu Kola (90)
- □ **Cholesterol Issues:** Almond (18), Amargo (180), Boldo (184), Cardamom (48), Chamomile (54), Ephedra (75), Flaxseed (81), Garlic (83), Hawthorn (93), Lemon Balm (109)
- □ **Diabetes Management, Type 2:** Amargo (180), Annatto (181), Apple Cider Vinegar (21), Bilberry (33), Black Lentils (35), Boldo (184), Butterfly Pea (44), Caraway (47), Cinnamon (57), Corn (62, 190), Damiana (191), Epazote (193), Fenugreek (79), Holy Basil (95), Lemon Balm (109), Licorice (111), Nettle (127), Noni (201), Wild Yam (174)
- □ **Glucose Metabolism Improvement:** Rehmannia (204)
- □ **Hypothyroidism:** Brazil Nut (40), Wild Yam (174)
- □ **Insulin Resistance:** Astragalus (26), Bilberry (33), Boswellia (39), Burdock (42), Cardamom (48), Garlic (83), Ginger (85), Green Tea (92)
- □ **Oxidative Stress-Related Diseases:** Lemon Balm (109), Licorice (111)
- □ **Weight Management:** Avocado (27), Bilberry (33), Brazil Nut (40), Butterfly Pea (44), Cayenne Pepper (52), Chamomile (54), Cinnamon (57), Coleus (189), Corn (62), Flaxseed (81), Macadamia Nuts (117), Platycodon (203)

Oral Health

- □ **Bleeding Gums:** Aloe Vera (19), Plantain (135), Yarrow (177)
- □ **Cavities:** Clove (58), Aloe Vera (19), Cranberry (64), Cinnamon (57)
- □ **Dental Abscesses:** Sage (148)
- □ **Foul Breath:** Nutmeg (128), Peppermint (133), Fennel (78), Cinnamon (57)
- □ **Gingivitis:** Eucalyptus (76), Sage (148), Turmeric (165), Aloe Vera (19)
- □ **Gum Disease:** Licorice Root (111), Neem (126), Myrrh (125), Eucalyptus (76)
- □ **Infected Gums:** Sage (148), Myrrh (125)
- □ **Mouth Infections:** Holy Basil (95), Myrrh (125), Tea Tree Oil (161)
- □ **Mouth Ulcers:** Chamomile (54), Calendula (46), Aloe Vera (19)
- □ **Oral Hygiene:** Holy Basil (95), Myrrh (125), Neem (126), Green Tea (92)
- □ **Periodontal Disease:** Tea Tree Oil (161), Eucalyptus (76), Turmeric (165)
- □ **Plaque Reduction:** Eucalyptus (76), Green Tea (92)
- □ **Sore Throat:** Sage (148)
- □ **Throat Infections:** Sage (148), Echinacea (72)
- □ **Tooth Decay:** Green Tea (92), Licorice Root (111), Cinnamon (57)
- □ **Toothaches:** Feverfew (80), Green Tea (92), Henbane (196), Nutmeg (128), Clove (58), Thyme (162)

Pain and Inflammation Management

- □ **Abdominal Pain:** Corydalis (191)
- □ **Arthritis:** Arnica (22), Ashwagandha (24), Basil (29), Black Cohosh (34), Black Pepper (36), Boswellia (39), Butcher's Broom (43), Comfrey (61), Feverfew (80), Jamaica dogwood (198), Lemongrass (110), Mistletoe (201), Turmeric (165), Yucca (179), Herbal Tea for Arthritis and Joint Pain (223)

- □ **Back Pain:** Comfrey (61), Lemongrass (110)
- □ **Bone Pain:** Avocado (27), Ground-ivy (195), Jasmine (198), Noni (201), Robert Geranium (204)
- □ **Bruises, Injuries, and Sore Muscles:** Arnica (22), Boswellia (39)
- □ **Earaches:** Henbane (196)
- □ **Fibromyalgia:** Arnica (22)
- □ **Headaches:** Cayenne pepper (52), Devil's Claw (69), Elderflower (73), Feverfew (80), Gentian (84), Laurustinus (199), Mistletoe (201), Wild Pansy (208)
- □ **Inflammation:** Avocado (27), Bilberry (33), Black Pepper (36), Butterfly Pea (44), Caraway (47), Cat's Claw (235), Cayenne pepper (52), Celery seed (53), Chervil (187), Comfrey (61), Linden flower (113), White Peony (172), White Snakeroot (208), Witch Hazel (175), Yarrow (177), Turmeric (165), Norse Yarrow Ale (262), Rosemary (146), Skullcap (154), Slippery Elm (155), White Willow (173)
- □ **Inflammatory Bowel Disease:** Slippery Elm (155), Turmeric (165), Ginger (85), Boswellia (39), Omega-3 Fatty Acids (213)
- □ **Muscle Pain and Disorders:** Corydalis (191), Lemongrass (110), Lobelia (115), White Peony (172)
- □ **Osteoarthritis:** Annatto (181), Kudzu (106)
- □ **Osteoporosis:** Kudzu (106)
- □ **Pain Relief (General):** Anise (20), Basil (29), Cinnamon (57), Clove (58), Ground-ivy (195), Henbane (196), Jamaica dogwood (198), Jasmine (198), Noni (201), Peppermint (133), Robert Geranium (204), Wild Yam (174), Witch Hazel (175), Yarrow (177), Willow Bark Pain Relief (267), Four Thieves Vinegar (264)

Respiratory and Throat Health

- □ **Bronchitis and Related Respiratory Problems:** Elderflower (73), Garlic (83), Gentian (84), Ginkgo Biloba (86), Ginger (85), Goldenseal (89), Lobelia (115), Mustard (124), Pelargonium (202), Red Clover (141), Reishi Mushroom (142), Schisandra (204), Umckaloabo (202), Yohimbe (209)
- □ **Colds and Flu:** Asthma Plant (182), Borage (184), Castor Bean (186), Chickweed (187), Coleus (189), Cornflower (190), Cumin (65), Epazote (193), Ground-ivy (195), Horsetail (197), Horehound (97), Indian Sandalwood (101), Jasmine (198), Laurustinus (199), Lemon (108), Lemongrass (110), Linden Flower (113), Mistletoe (201), Platycodon (203), Roselle (145), Turmeric (165), Wild Pansy (208)
- □ **Coughs:** Black Cohosh (34), Black Pepper (36), Elderflower (73), Elecampane (74), Eucalyptus (76), Fennel (78), Ginger (85), Native American Slippery Elm (261), Wild Yam (174), Yarrow (177)
- □ **Respiratory and Asthma Health:** Anise (20), Astragalus (26), Basil (29), Boswellia (39), Caraway (47), Clove (58), Coffee (60), Egyptian Kyphi (254), Holy Basil (95), Horseradish (99), Hyssop (100), Lavender (107), Marshmallow (118), Nutmeg (128), Oregano (131), Plantain (135), Respiratory Relief Rub: Breathe Easy Salve (252), Tea Tree (161)
- □ **Respiratory Issues:** Eucalyptus (76), Fennel (78)
- □ **Sinus Issues:** Ancient Roman Mustard Plaster (262), Elderflower (73)
- □ **Sore Throats:** Goldenseal (89), Mustard (124), Native American Slippery Elm (261)

Skin and Wound Health

- □ **Acne:** Aloe Vera (19), Lavender (107), Lime (112)
- □ **Anti-Aging:** Honeybush (197), Turmeric (165)
- □ **Boils:** Mustard (124)
- □ **Bruising/Sprains:** Arnica (22), Calendula (46), Comfrey (61)
- □ **Burns, Cuts, and Wounds:** Aloe Vera (19), Arnica (22), Boswellia (39), Calamus (45), Calendula (46)
- □ **Dandruff and Itchy Scalp:** Aloe Vera (19), Oregano (131)
- □ **Dry Skin:** Aloe Vera (19), Astragalus (26), Herbal Skin-Soother Salve (250)
- □ **Eczema:** Barberry (183), Chickweed (187), Goldenseal (89), Pau d'Arco (202), Red Clover (141)
- □ **Hair Health:** Fo Ti (194), Horsetail (197)
- □ **Insect Bites:** Leonotis/lion's ear (200), Witch Hazel (175)
- □ **Oily Skin:** Aloe Vera (19), Tea Tree (161)
- □ **Postoperative Wounds:** Aloe Vera (19)
- □ **Pressure Ulcers:** Aloe Vera (19)
- □ **Psoriasis:** Aloe Vera (19), Dandelion (66), Nettle (127), Turmeric (165)
- □ **Rashes:** Leonotis/lion's ear (200)
- □ **Scalp Conditions:** Amargo (180)
- □ **Scars:** Calendula (46)
- □ **Skin Conditions:** Barberry (183), Bee Balm (31), Chervil (187), Cornflower (190), Epazote (193), Fumitory (195), Horsetail (197), Juniper Berry (102), Mustard (124), Plantain (135), Purslane (138), Red Clover (141), Sarsaparilla (149), Sea Buckthorn (205)
- □ **Skin Health:** Almond (18), Aloe Vera (19), Ancient Mayan Achiote Balm (260), Astragalus (26), Burdock (42), Calendula (46), Castor Bean (186), Chamomile (54), Cherry (55), Dandelion (66), Egyptian Aloe and Sesame Oil Lotion (268), Evening Primrose (77), Flaxseed (81), Green Tea (92), Herbal Skin-Soother Salve (250), Honeybush (197), Horehound (97), Juniper Berry (102), Lavender (107), Lime (112), Macadamia Nuts (117),

Native American Slippery Elm (261), Rooibos (144), Sarsaparilla (149), Sea Buckthorn (205), Senna (151), Strawberry (158), Tea Tree (161), Yucca (179)

- ☐ **Skin Infections:** Activated Charcoal (180), Barberry (183), Chickweed (187), Cornflower (190), Fumitory (195), Horsetail (197), Lime (112), Mustard (124), Qing Hao (207), Sea Buckthorn (205), Sweet Annie (207)
- ☐ **Skin Inflammation:** Aloe Vera (19), Dried Rose (71)
- ☐ **Skin Irritation:** Aloe Vera (19), Arnica (22), Basil (29), Burdock (42), Calendula (46), Chamomile (54), Goldenseal (89), Turmeric (165), Witch Hazel (175)
- ☐ **Skin Ulcers and Chronic Wounds:** Aloe Vera (19)
- ☐ **Sunburns:** Aloe Vera (19), Lavender (107)
- ☐ **Vitiligo:** Turmeric (165)
- ☐ **Warts:** Dandelion (66)
- ☐ **Wound Healing:** Buchu (185), Butterfly Pea (44), Calamus (45), Calendula (46), Chickweed (187), Comfrey (61), Cornflower (190), Deadly Nightshade (68), Fumitory (195), Gotu Kola (90), Horsetail (197), Plantain Poultice (220), Sea Buckthorn (205), Yarrow (177)

Women's Health

- ☐ **Breast Swellings:** Goldenseal (89)
- ☐ **Breast Tenderness:** Chasteberry (187)
- ☐ **Childbirth-Related Problems:** Wild Yam (174)
- ☐ **Complicated Childbirth (Expulsion of Placenta):** Feverfew (80)
- ☐ **Cracked Nipples:** Aloe Vera (19)
- ☐ **Dysmenorrhea Symptoms:** Fennel (78)
- ☐ **Hot Flashes:** Red Clover (141)
- ☐ **Inflammatory Conditions and Pain Management:** Feverfew (80), Flaxseed (81), Garlic (83), Ginger (85), Goldenseal (89), Green Tea (92)
- ☐ **Menopausal Symptoms:** Fennel (78), Licorice (111), Passionflower (132), Red Clover (141), Sage (148), White Peony (172)
- ☐ **Menstrual Cramps:** Chervil (187), Corydalis (191), Cramp Bark (63), Feverfew (80), Horseradish (99), Jamaica dogwood (198), Jasmine (198), Juniper Berry (102), Mugwort (122), White Peony (172)
- ☐ **Menstrual Cycle Regulation:** Motherwort (121)
- ☐ **Menstrual Discomfort:** Raspberries (139)
- ☐ **Menstrual Disorders/Issues:** Chasteberry (187), Damiana (191), Dried Rose (71), Rehmannia (204)
- ☐ **Menstrual Irregularities:** Chasteberry (187), Rehmannia (204)
- ☐ **Night Sweats:** Red Clover (141)
- ☐ **PMS Symptoms:** Anise (20), Borage (184), Burdock (42), Chasteberry (187), Fenugreek (79)
- ☐ **Reproductive Health (Childbirth, Milk Production, Menstrual Cycles):** Anise (20)
- ☐ **Reproductive System Conditions:** Barun (207), Varuna (207)
- ☐ **Rheumatoid Arthritis:** Ginger (85)
- ☐ **Sexual Dysfunction in Women:** Celery seed (53)
- ☐ **Uterine Prolapse:** Cramp Bark (63)
- ☐ **Vaginal Issues (Discharge, Itching, Odors):** Calendula (46)
- ☐ **Vaginitis:** Goldenseal (89)
- ☐ **Women's Health/Issues:** Dong Quai (70), Elecampane (74), Evening Primrose (77), Valerian (167), White Peony (172)

About This Book

Welcome to your journey to better health through herbs! This book is here to guide you as you delve into the enchanting world of herbal medicine, its rich history, and the synergistic wonders that have made it an essential part of human healing for millennia.

The concept of synergy—the idea that some things, when combined, create an effect greater than the sum of their separate effects—is a cornerstone of herbal medicine. While a single herb can be immensely beneficial, when combined in the right proportions with other herbs, its effects can be amplified exponentially. This book helps unveil these synergistic effects that make herbal remedies not only a rival to modern medicine but in many ways, its superior.

In these pages, you'll find a brief overview of the history of herbal medicine and how it has been used in traditional cultures around the world, including how our ancestors tapped into these synergies to create potent remedies. You'll also get instructions for making concoctions, from simple infusions and tinctures to more complex preparations such as salves and syrups. As you dive deeper, you'll learn how various plants interact and enhance each other's healing properties. We've cited modern research throughout the book to back up the historical uses of herbs, often highlighting their synergistic benefits. You can find sources for the parenthetically cited statements at the end of the book.

In addition to learning about herbal remedies and their synergistic effects, this book also covers how to grow these healing herbs in your garden. By cultivating your own herbs, you can have confidence in the purity and quality of the plants you use for your remedies. This practice not only ensures that you get the most out of each plant but also allows you to design your garden for synergistic growth. Growing your own herbs also allows you to take charge of your health and well-being and forge a deeper connection with the natural world. In the plant profiles, you'll find information on how to grow each herb, any special considerations, and tips on which herbs complement each other best.

Whether you're a seasoned herbalist or just starting out on your journey with natural health, this book is a treasure trove of information. It's a testament to the time-tested wisdom of ancient practices, enhanced with modern research, all pointing towards the synergistic power of nature. Empower yourself with the natural healing capabilities of herbs and discover the potent synergies that have stood the test of time.

All About Herbal Medicines

A plant can be considered medicinal if it contains compounds that have a therapeutic effect when ingested or applied to the body. Beyond the individual compounds, the beauty of plants lies in their synergistic makeup. This means that in a single plant, the presence of thousands of compounds might work together in harmony, amplifying the healing effect that wouldn't be possible if isolated. These compounds may be found in various parts of the plant, including the leaves, flowers, roots, and seeds.

It is difficult to estimate exactly how many plants are medicinal, as new research is constantly being done on the potential health benefits of various plant species. However, it is believed that thousands of plant species have medicinal properties, with many yet to be discovered synergies that enhance their efficacy.

The use of a particular plant as an herbal remedy depends on a variety of factors, including its chemical makeup, traditional use, the potential synergistic interactions between its compounds, and scientific evidence supporting its effectiveness. To determine if a plant can be used for herbal remedies, researchers may conduct studies not only to identify the active ingredients but also to explore their combined therapeutic effects.

Not all plants are safe to use as herbal remedies. Some plants can be toxic or have other harmful effects when ingested or applied to the body. Be cautious when using herbal remedies and consult with a healthcare professional or a qualified herbalist before using any plant-based remedies. It's essential to recognize the synergies that might lead to enhanced therapeutic effects but also to understand those that might lead to adverse reactions.

Herbal Medicine Vs. Traditional Medicine

Herbal medicine is an alternative medicine that uses plant materials to treat or prevent various ailments. These plant materials, rich in synergies, may include herbs, roots, leaves, and other parts of the plant and can be taken internally or applied externally.

Conventional or "normal" medicine, on the other hand, refers to the mainstream healthcare system practiced in most countries. This type of medicine uses pharmaceutical drugs, many of which initially borrowed from plant compounds, to treat or prevent various ailments.

The use of herbal remedies and conventional medicine has a long and intertwined history. The inherent synergies in plants have inspired many of the drugs used in conventional medicine. And indeed, many herbal remedies have been utilized for centuries to treat a broad spectrum of ailments.

However, the recognition and use of these synergies and the divergence of herbal and conventional medicine as separate entities is a relatively recent development. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, advances in chemistry and pharmacology led to the development of synthetic drugs, leading to the prominence of conventional medicine. As a result, herbal medicine, with its vast potential for synergistic healing, began to be seen more as an alternative or complementary form of healthcare.

Today, while herbal and conventional medicine are often viewed as separate entities, a renewed interest in the synergies of plant compounds suggests they can be used together, complementing each other as part of a holistic healthcare approach.

Medicines Side By Side: A Comparison

Overall, the decision to use herbal or modern medicine depends on various factors, including the condition being treated, the severity of the condition, and the potential risks and benefits of each option. It is important to consult with a healthcare professional to determine the most appropriate treatment for your specific needs.

	Herbal Medicine	Conventional Medicine
Composition	• Made from natural plant materials • May be a cocktail of active ingredients; including some that you may not even want..	• Chemically isolated active ingredients mixed with excipients (stabilizers or fillers). • Isolated compounds make it easy to choose exactly what you need.
Treatable Conditions	• Effective in treating many conditions.	• Effective in treating many conditions.
Regulation	• Not subject to the same level of regulation as synthetic drugs, making it difficult to determine the quality and safety of a particular product.	• Heavily regulated; rigorous scientific trials have determined quality and safety.
Standardization	• So many uncontrollable variables influence a plant's chemical composition. Herbal remedies vary in their active ingredient content, making it difficult to determine an appropriate dosage.	• Subject to strict regulations and are required to meet specific standards for purity and potency. You know exactly what each pill has and how much.

	Herbal Medicine	Conventional Medicine
Supporting Scientific Evidence	• There is often a lack of scientific evidence to support the effectiveness of herbal remedies, which may make it difficult to determine their true benefits. This is not due to herbal medicines being a sham; it is because it's very difficult to do statistical tests on plants that wildly vary in composition.	• The simplicity and consistency of conventional medicine make conducting research and clinical trials much easier than herbal medicine. Conventional medicine is heavily backed by scientific evidence.
Interactions with other medications	• Can interact with other medications, which can be a concern for people taking multiple drugs.	• Can also interact with other medications, but it is usually well documented.
Accessibility	• Many herbs can be grown by yourself or bought in a prepared form with no prescription needed.	• Many pharmaceutical drugs require prescriptions, expensive insurance plans, or reliance on the supply chain to obtain.

Working With The Body

Medicinal herbs can have various effects on different body systems, depending on the specific plant and the phytochemicals it contains. Here are a few examples:

Immune system: Some medicinal herbs have immune-boosting properties and can help to stimulate the body's natural defense mechanisms. For example, echinacea is a well-known herb often used to treat colds and flu by inhibiting viral growth and secretion of pro-inflammatory cytokines (1).

Digestive system: Many medicinal herbs are used to treat digestive disorders, such as indigestion, constipation, and bloating. For example, ginger is a common herb used to relieve nausea and promote digestion. It works by accelerating gastric emptying and stimulates antral contractions in people (2).

Cardiovascular system: Some medicinal herbs have been found to have a positive effect on the cardiovascular system, including lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels. For example, garlic has heart-protective properties and has been shown to lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease (3).

The mechanisms of medicinal herbs are not always fully understood and can vary based on the plant and individual. Always use them with caution and under a healthcare professional's guidance.

Sourcing Herbs

Sourcing herbs is an important aspect of herbalism, as the quality and potency of the herbs you use can greatly impact the effectiveness of your remedies. In this section, we will explore the various options for sourcing herbs and discuss the pros and cons of each method.

- **Growing your own herbs:** This is a good option if you have space to grow a garden, as you can be sure that the herbs you use are chemical-free and grown safely and sustainably. One of the main benefits of growing your herbs is that you can control the growing conditions and have confidence in the plants' purity. However, it can be time-consuming and requires some knowledge and effort to properly care for and harvest the herbs. Not all herbs will be suitable to grow in your climate.

- **Buying herbs from a local farm or farmer's market:** This is a good option if you want to support local agriculture and have access to fresh, high-quality herbs. Many small farms use organic methods and offer insights into their cultivation. However, selection might be limited, and prices may be higher.
- **Purchasing herbs from a store or online retailer:** Many stores and online shops offer dried herbs, with some providing organic or sustainably grown options. While these are good for those wary of additives, it's vital to research and choose a reputable source, as determining the herbs' purity can be challenging.

Woman foraging for wild garlic

- **Wildcrafting herbs** involves harvesting herbs from the wild rather than cultivating them in a garden or farm. While beneficial for those with access to diverse medicinal areas, it's essential to know plant identification and practice ethical harvesting for sustainability. Be wary of lookalike plants!

Why You Should Grow Medicinal Herbs

Growing a medicinal garden is an easy and enjoyable way to take control of your healthcare and promote sustainability. Here are some reasons you should consider starting a medicinal garden:

- Access to natural remedies: By cultivating your medicinal plants, you ensure a steady supply of natural remedies for health maintenance or minor issues. This is particularly valuable during drug shortages or when companies are price gouging.
- Self-sufficiency: Growing your own medicinal plants can increase your self-sufficiency and reduce your reliance on the healthcare system. This can be especially important for people living in areas with limited access to healthcare or who may have difficulty affording pharmaceutical drugs.
- Environmental benefits: Plant-based remedies are more environmentally friendly than synthetic drugs, as they do not require chemical fertilizers or pesticides and do not produce harmful emissions during production. You can contribute to a more sustainable healthcare system by growing your own medicinal plants.
- Sense of accomplishment: A sense of accomplishment comes with growing your own medicinal plants. You can take pride in providing natural remedies for your family and friends and being more self-sufficient.

Starting a medicinal garden is a simple and rewarding way to take control of your health and ensure you're getting the highest quality of herbs.

Simple indoor herb garden

A Brief History of Herbal Medicine

Ancient Civilizations

Herbal medicine has been used for thousands of years in ancient civilizations as a form of natural healing and remedies. Many ancient cultures had their own unique uses for herbs and plants in medicine. They recognized the medicinal properties of plants and harnessed them to treat a wide range of ailments.

One of the most notable examples of herbal medicine in ancient civilizations is that of the ancient Egyptians. The Ebers Papyrus, an ancient Egyptian medical text dating back to around w550 BCE, contains descriptions of over 700 different plant-based remedies. The Egyptians used herbs such as myrrh, frankincense, and aloe vera to treat a variety of ailments, including wounds, infections, and skin conditions. They also used plants like castor oil and mandrake as pain relievers and laxatives.

In ancient China, the use of herbal remedies was first recorded in the Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing (also known as the Divine Farmer's Materia Medica), a text that dates back to around 200 BCE. This text lists 365 different plants and their medicinal properties and is considered one of the oldest surviving texts on Chinese herbal medicine. Some of the herbs commonly used in Chinese herbal medicine include ginseng, ginger, and licorice. These herbs are believed to have healing properties and are often used to boost the immune system, improve circulation, and relieve pain.

In ancient India, the use of herbal remedies was also widespread. The Ayurvedic medicine system dates back to around 1000 BCE, is based on the use of herbs and other natural substances to treat a wide range of ailments. The Charaka Samhita, an ancient Indian medical text, lists over 1,000 different herbs and their medicinal properties.

Ayurvedic medicine is still commonly practiced today

The ancient Greeks also deeply understood the medicinal properties of plants. The Greek physician Hippocrates, known as the "father of medicine," wrote about the use of plants for healing in his famous work, the Hippocratic Corpus. The Greek physician Dioscorides, a contemporary of Hippocrates, wrote the "De Materia Medica" in the 1st century CE, which was a comprehensive guide to the medicinal use of plants. It was widely used for centuries and served as the basis for much Western herbal medicine. The Greek physician Galen, who lived in the 2nd century CE, also wrote extensively on the use of herbs in medicine. His work was influential in the development of medieval medicine. Herbs were used for a wide range of ailments, including digestive problems, respiratory issues, and skin conditions. Some examples of herbs used by the ancient Greeks include:

- Mint to soothe indigestion and nausea
- Willow bark to relieve pain and reduce fevers
- Dandelion as a diuretic
- Parsley for kidney problems

Statue of Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine

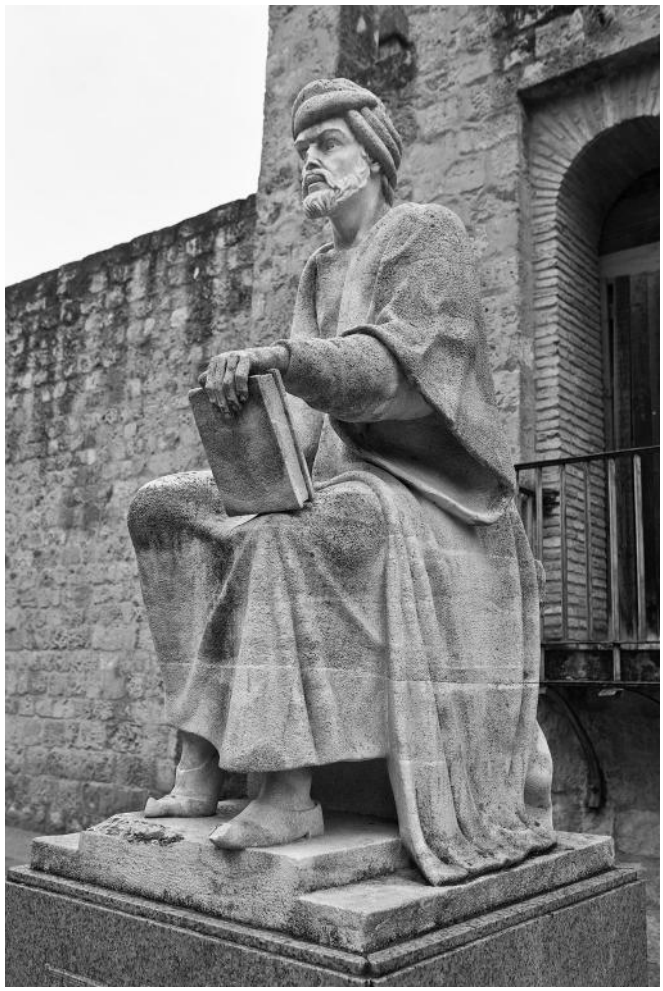
The ancient Romans also had a strong tradition of using plant-based remedies for medicinal purposes. The Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder wrote a comprehensive work on natural history called the Naturalis Historia, which included a section on medicinal plants. This text, written in the 1st century CE, describes the medicinal properties of over 500 different plants and is considered a valuable resource on ancient Roman herbal medicine. The Romans were also influenced by the Greek tradition of using herbs for medicinal purposes. The Roman physician Dioscorides wrote a text called De Materia Medica, which was a compilation of Greek and Roman knowledge on medicinal plants. This text, written in the 1st century CE, is considered one of the most important works on herbal medicine and was widely used throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.

The Middle Ages

Herbal medicine has been an integral part of Middle Age cultures for centuries. In Europe during the Middle Ages, monasteries played a significant role in preserving and developing medical knowledge, including herbs for healing. Many monastic gardens were established, where herbs were grown for medicinal use. These gardens were also used as a place for study and research, where monks would experiment with different herbs and document their healing properties. In addition to monastic influence, folk medicine, passed down through generations also played a significant role in the use of herbal medicine during the Middle Ages.

In Islamic civilization, during the 8th and 9th century, the Persian physician, Rhazes, wrote extensively on the use of herbs for medicine, his book “Kitab al-Hawi” was used as a reference text for centuries. The Persian physician Avicenna, in the 11th century, wrote “The Canon of Medicine” which was used as a medical textbook in universities for centuries and had a significant influence on European medical education.

Herbs such as sage, rosemary, and thyme were commonly used for their antiseptic properties, while chamomile and lavender were used for their calming effects. Other herbs, like ginger and cinnamon, were used for their warming properties and to stimulate circulation. The use of herbs was not limited to just internal consumption, many were also used topically for things like wound healing, and skin irritation.



Statue of Avicenna, one of the greatest contributors to medicine during the Islamic Golden Age

The Modern Era

In the modern era, there has been a shift towards scientific medicine and a marginalization of herbal medicine. With the advent of new technologies and advances in medical research, traditional methods of healing, such as herbal medicine, were often viewed as less effective and less reliable. This led to a decline in the use of herbs as a form of treatment, and they were often relegated to the realm of alternative or complementary medicine.

However, in recent decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in herbal medicine. This has been driven by a growing awareness of the limitations of conventional medicine, and a desire to explore more natural and holistic forms of treatment. People have become more interested in understanding the benefits of herbal medicine and how it can be used in combination with modern medicine to promote health and well-being. In this book, we will explore the benefits of using herbal remedies, as well as provide practical information on how to safely use and create your own herbal remedies at home. We'll also delve into the world of herb gardening, and provide tips on how to grow and harvest your own herbs for use in remedies.

So whether you're a seasoned herbalist or just starting to discover the wonders of natural remedies, this book is for you. Let's dive in and learn about the power of plants to heal and improve our overall wellbeing.

How To Prepare Herbal Remedies

Processing and preparing herbs is important in creating effective and safe herbal remedies. There are many different methods for preparing herbs, each with its own unique benefits and considerations. In this section, we will explore the various ways to process and prepare herbs, including methods such as infusion, decoction, tincture, ointment, and more. By understanding the different options for processing and preparing herbs, you can create the most effective and suitable remedies for your needs.

Drying Herbs

Drying herbs is one of the oldest and most traditional methods of preservation. It's an easy and cost-effective way to extend their shelf love and ensure that you have a supply of flavorful and aromatic herbs throughout the year. Here's how to dry herbs properly:

1. Choose your Herbs: Select fresh herbs from your garden or buy them from a local market. Any herb can be dried, but some herbs like rosemary, thyme, sage, and oregano are particularly well-suited for drying.
2. Harvest the Herbs: It's best to harvest your herbs early in the day, after the dew has evaporated, but before the sun gets too hot. This ensures that the herbs are at their freshest and most flavorful. Cut them just above the leaves, leaving a few inches of stem attached.
3. Wash and Dry the Herbs: Rinse the herbs under cold running water and pat them dry with a paper towel or clean kitchen towel. Make sure they are completely dry before proceeding to the next step.
4. Bundle the Herbs: Tie the herbs together in small bundles using twine or rubber bands. Make sure the bundles are not too large, as this can slow down the drying process.
5. Hang the Herbs: Hang the herb bundles upside down in a well-ventilated, dry area, such as a warm, dry room or a covered porch. Avoid areas that are damp or have direct sunlight, as this can cause the herbs to lose their flavor and color.
6. Dry the Herbs: Allow the herbs to dry for several days until they are completely dry and brittle. You can test for dryness by crushing a small leaf between your fingers; if it crumbles easily, the herbs are dry.
7. Remove the Leaves: Once the herbs are dry, remove the leaves from the stems and discard the stems. Store the leaves in an airtight container, such as a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid.

Freshly harvested herbs hanging in the sun, ready to be transformed into healing remedies.

Dried herbs can be stored for up to a year, and they're perfect for use in teas, infusions, and many dishes.

When storing dried herbs, make sure to keep them

in a dry, cool, and dark area, preferably without oxygen. If you plan on storing dried herbs for a prolonged time, consider vacuum sealing them for maximum longevity.

To use dried herbs, simply crush the leaves between your fingers or grind them with a mortar and pestle to release their flavor.

What's The Best Way To Take A Herb?

There isn't a one-size-fits-all answer to this question, as the best way to take a herb will depend on the specific herb and your individual needs and preferences. The preparation technique used to extract the beneficial compounds from herbs can significantly impact the chemical properties of the resulting liquid. One method, decoction, involves simmering the herbs for an extended time. This approach is particularly effective for extracting compounds from harder plant parts like roots, bark, and nuts. The prolonged heating time and higher temperatures can result in a liquid with a higher concentration of oil-soluble compounds. On the other hand, the infusion method involves steeping the herbs for a shorter time. This technique is used for softer plant parts like leaves, flowers, and berries. The shorter steeping time and lower temperatures can produce a liquid with a higher concentration of water-soluble compounds. It's important to note that each method has its own advantages, depending on the herb or plant used and the desired outcome.

That being said, a few general considerations can help guide your decision:

- Consider the herb's active components and how the body best absorbs them. Some herbs are best taken as teas, while others are more effective in a topical ointment.
- Think about your goals for taking the herb. Are you looking to address a specific health concern or just hoping to support overall wellness? Different preparation methods may be more suitable for different purposes.
- Consider your personal preferences. Do you prefer the convenience of capsules? The ritual of brewing a cup of tea? The versatility of an infused oil? Choose a preparation method that you will enjoy using.

Ultimately, the best way to take a herb is the way that works best for you. Don't be afraid to try different preparation methods and see what works best for you. With time and experience, you will discover what works best for you and your body.

Infusion

Infusion remains a staple in herbal preparations, particularly for herbs teeming with volatile oils, like chamomile or peppermint. While hot infusions rapidly extract desired compounds, they can sometimes compromise delicate phytochemicals, thus potentially diminishing their synergistic benefits. Cold infusions, being gentler and more prolonged, preserve these fragile compounds, optimizing the benefits derived from the herb. Your regular tea is a quintessential hot infusion example.

Here are liquids you can use as a solvent for infusion:

- Water is the most common solvent for making herbal infusions.
- Alcohol effectively extracts various compounds from herbs, including alkaloids, flavonoids, and essential oils.
- Glycerin is a sweet, clear liquid used as a solvent in making tinctures. It is less potent than alcohol, but it is a good option for making tinctures for children or people sensitive to alcohol.
- Vinegar is another solvent used to make herbal infusions. It is particularly useful for extracting minerals and other nutrients from herbs.
- Oil can also be used as a solvent to make

infusions. They can also be used as a base for other preparations, such as ointments or salves.

Not all herbs are suitable for all solvents, and using the wrong solvent may not extract the desired compounds from the herbs.

Herbal teas are one of the most common infusion preparations

Here's how to make an infusion:

8. Add a small amount of dried or fresh herbs to a solvent to make an infusion. The water can be cold or hot depending on the infusion style and herb.
9. Cover and steep, depending on the herb and desired strength.
10. Strain the herbs and discard them.

Decoction

Decoction is similar to infusion but involves simmering the herbs in water for longer durations. This method is specifically useful for harder plant parts such as roots, bark, and nuts. These robust parts often contain multiple compounds that, when released together through the extended simmering, can produce a synergistic therapeutic effect. Decoctions are suitable for making syrups, tinctures, and other concentrated herbal remedies. The resulting liquid can be consumed directly or used as a base for other mixtures. Given the prolonged cooking time, a decoction might have a robust flavor, which some may prefer to sweeten with natural additives like honey. It's crucial to be selective with your herbs for decoction, as some might lose their medicinal properties with extended heating.

Here's how to make a decoction:

1. To make a decoction, add the herbs to a pot of water or oil and bring them to a boil.
2. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10-30 minutes, depending on the herb and desired strength.
3. Strain the herbs and discard them.

Tincture

Tinctures are concentrated herbal extracts created by immersing herbs in alcohol. Their popularity stems from their convenience and extended shelf life compared to other herbal preparations like teas or decoctions. Administered in minimal doses, usually a few drops at a time, they can be taken sublingually, ensuring rapid absorption into the bloodstream. Alternatively, they can be diluted in water or juice for consumption. The alcohol not only acts as a preservative but also effectively extracts the beneficial compounds, often working to pull out the synergistic properties inherent in the mix of herbs. The proportion of herb to the liquid in a tincture will depend on the specific herb and the intended potency. While typically crafted with dried herbs, fresh herbs can also be utilized. The choice of alcohol, whether it's high-proof variants like vodka, brandy, or gin, or alternatives like glycerin for those sensitive to alcohol, can vary. For herbs that might have a strong taste or diminish in potency when exposed to heat or light, tinctures offer an ideal solution.

Here's how to make a tincture:

1. Add herbs to a sealable container of alcohol. The ratio depends on what recipe you're following.

2. Seal the container and store it in a cool, dark place for 2-6 weeks, shaking it daily to help extract the active compounds.
3. Strain the herbs and discard them.

Tinctures are commonly taken via a few drops underneath the tongue

Ointment

Ointment is a topical preparation made by mixing herbs with a fatty base. Ointments are useful for treating skin conditions or sore muscles. Ointments are a good choice for herbs best applied directly to the skin, such as calendula or comfrey.

The base is typically made up of oils and waxes when making an ointment. Here are some common bases used in ointment making:

- Beeswax is a natural wax obtained from bees' honeycomb. It is a popular ingredient in ointments because it helps to thicken the mixture and makes it semi-solid. It is also an emulsifier, which helps to bind the oil and water-based ingredients together.
- Petroleum jelly, also known as vaseline, is a by-product of the oil industry. It is used as a base in ointments because it is a good emollient that helps moisturize and protect the skin.
- Lanolin is a wax from sheep's wool. It is a popular ingredient in ointments because it is a good emollient, and the skin easily absorbs it.
- Cocoa butter is a vegetable fat obtained from the cocoa bean. It is used as a base in ointments because it is a good emollient and has a pleasant aroma.
- Shea butter is a vegetable fat obtained from the nuts of the shea tree. It is used as a base in ointments because it is a good emollient and it has anti-inflammatory properties.
- Food oils like olive, coconut, sweet almond, sunflower, or grapeseed oil can be used as a base for ointment. They can be infused with herbs and beeswax to make a semi-solid preparation.

Note: You can use some of these bases alone, but typically a combination of 2 or more is used to get the desired consistency. It is important to remember that not all oils are good for all skin types, so it is best to test them on a small area of skin before using them in a larger area.

Ointment is made by mixing active ingredient into a fatty base

Here's how to make ointment:

1. Gently heat the fatty base in a double boiler until melted.
2. Add herbs and continue to heat until the herbs are fully infused into the oil.
3. Strain the herbs and discard them.

4. Allow the ointment to cool and solidify before transferring it to a jar or tin.

Poultice

Poultice is a herbal remedy that involves applying a warm, moist mixture of herbs directly to the skin. The herbs are typically ground or mashed and are applied to the skin in a paste form. Poultices are used to promote healing, reduce inflammation, and relieve pain. They can be applied to various ailments, including bruises, sprains, strains, and skin infections.

Poultice applied to a man's knees

To make and use a poultice:

1. Mix a small amount of water with the herbs to create a paste.
2. Apply the poultice to the affected area and cover it with a cloth or bandage.
3. Leave the poultice in place for 20-30 minutes or longer if desired.
4. The area is cleaned with warm water and dried.

Note: It's important to note that poultices should not be used on broken skin or open wounds and that if you have any concerns about using a poultice, it's always best to consult a qualified healthcare professional.

Syrup

Syrup is a sweet, medicinal preparation made by mixing herbs with sugar or honey. Syrups are used to administer herbs in a form that is easy to take and palatable, especially for children or people who have trouble swallowing pills. You can use them to treat various conditions, such as coughs, sore throats, and respiratory infections.

Here's how to make syrup:

1. Bring water to a boil in a small saucepan.
2. Once it starts boiling, add sugar or honey and stir until completely dissolved.
3. Add the herbs and reduce the heat to low.
4. Simmer for about 15-20 minutes or until the liquid has reduced by about half.
5. Remove from heat and let it cool for a few minutes.
6. Strain the liquid through a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth to remove the herb particles.
7. Pour the syrup into a clean bottle or jar, and store it in the refrigerator.

Note: You can adjust the ratio of sugar to water depending on the desired consistency, and the type of herbs used can also vary.

Capsules

Capsules are an easy way of ingesting herbs without tasting them

Capsules are a convenient way to take herbs, as they are easy to swallow and do not have a taste. To make capsules, fill empty capsules with dried, powdered herbs. Capsules are a good choice for herbs that are unpleasant to taste or difficult to prepare in other ways, such as cayenne pepper.

Essential Oils

Essential oils are concentrated plant extracts made using steam distillation or other methods. Essential oils are highly potent and should be used with caution. To use essential oils, dilute them in a carrier oil or other base before applying them to the skin. Essential oils can be used topically, aromatically, or internally, depending on the oil. Essential oils are a good choice for herbs that are difficult to prepare in other ways or that have a strong aroma, such as lavender or tea tree.

There are several methods for making essential oils at home, although it is generally more difficult and time-consuming than purchasing them from a supplier. The most common method for extracting essential oils from herbs is steam distillation.

Here's how to extract essential oils using steam distillation:

1. Assemble distillation kit with flask, condenser and collection flask.
2. Add plant material and water to distillation flask.
3. Heat until steam rises.
4. Condense steam through condenser, collecting essential oil in collection flask.
5. Separate essential oil from water in the collected liquid.

It is important to note that making essential oils at home is labor-intensive and may not be practical for large quantities of oils. It is also important to be aware of any potential safety concerns when using essential oils, as some oils can be toxic or irritant when used improperly. It is always best to use caution and follow proper guidelines when using essential oils.

Essential oils may be extracted from many different herbs

Hydrosols

During the steam distillation process, volatile aromatic compounds from plants are carried by steam, leading to the separation of essential oils and hydrosols. While essential oils are concentrated and potent, hydrosols contain diluted traces of these compounds along with water-soluble plant components. This mildness makes hydrosols remarkably safe for pregnant women and babies.

Hydrosols, also referred to as floral waters, herbal distillates, or plant waters find applications in skincare, aromatherapy, culinary practices, and even household cleaning. Because of their lower concentration, they're generally safe to use directly on the skin, making them excellent options for facial toners, refreshing mists, and soothing body sprays.

A scientific study published in the Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine journal in 2018 demonstrated that rose hydrosol has potent antimicrobial properties, making it a brilliant natural alternative to chemically laden disinfectants. Other hydrosols, like lavender and chamomile, are known for their calming and stress-relieving effects. They can be used as spritzes on your pillow or bed linen to aid restful sleep.

Certain hydrosols can even be consumed. Think peppermint hydrosol for digestive discomfort or rose hydrosol for uplifting one's mood. But, here's the golden rule: Always consult with a healthcare professional before taking any hydrosols internally. Safety first, folks!

To make your own hydrosol, you'll need a heat source, a large pot with a lid, clean water, ice, a heat-safe bowl, and, of course, your chosen plant material.

Here's a simple step-by-step instruction to make your own hydrosol at home:

1. Preparation: Begin by thoroughly cleaning and then sterilizing all your equipment. This will ensure that no contaminants end up in your hydrosol.
2. Herb Placement: Place the brick or the small heat-proof bowl upside down in the center of the large pot. Arrange your fresh herbs or flowers around this brick or bowl.
3. Water Addition: Pour distilled water over the herbs until they are just covered. The water shouldn't touch the top of the brick or small bowl.
4. Collection Bowl: Place the stainless steel or glass bowl on top of the brick or the small bowl. This will be where the hydrosol condenses and collects.
5. Lid Position: Put the pot lid upside down (so that the handle is inside the pot). This allows the steam to condense on the lid and then drip into your collection bowl.
6. Heating: Heat the pot on a low to medium setting. As the water heats up, it will turn into steam, passing through the plant material and capturing its essence.
7. Ice on Lid: As the steam starts to rise, place ice cubes on top of the inverted pot lid. This helps the steam to condense faster and drop into the collection bowl.
8. Simmering: Allow the pot to simmer for 20-30 minutes. Make sure to keep an eye on the water level in the pot and the ice on the lid, replenishing as needed.
9. Collection: After simmering, turn off the heat and let everything cool down for a bit. Once cool, you can carefully remove the bowl from inside the pot. The liquid in this bowl is your hydrosol.
10. Storage: Transfer the hydrosol into a sterilized glass bottle or container using a funnel. Seal tightly. Store in a cool, dark place or refrigerate. It's best to use your hydrosol within 6 months.

And that's it! You've made your own hydrosol. Enjoy experimenting with different plant materials to find your favorite scents and uses.

Rosemary hydrosol provides invigorating and clarifying effects.

Medicinal Herbs Facts

In this section, we will be exploring a variety of medicinal herbs that have been used for centuries to treat a wide range of ailments. From soothing sore throats to reducing inflammation, these herbs have been trusted by many cultures around the world for their healing properties. As we delve into the history and science of each herb, you will gain a deeper understanding of how they can be used to improve your overall health and wellbeing.

We will begin by discussing the origins of each herb, including where they are native to and how they have been used throughout history. We will then delve into the latest scientific research on the effectiveness of each herb and its potential benefits and risks. Our modern research section is backed with recent studies, cited in the back of the book, so you can reference the citation page if you want to learn more about the study.

In addition to the detailed information provided, this section also includes clear and detailed pictures of each herb, making it easy to identify and differentiate between them. This is especially useful for those who are looking to grow their own medicinal herbs.

As you read through this section, you will gain a deeper understanding of the power of medicinal herbs and how to use them for optimal health benefits. And, as you move on to the next section of the book, you will find more detailed instruction on how to grow and use these herbs for medicinal purposes, with clear pictures for identification and use.

So, join us on this journey as we explore the world of medicinal herbs and discover the natural power of nature's medicine cabinet.

A complete citations list is available online at:

www.ancientremediesrevived.com/book/citations

Growing information for some common herbs is also located at:

www.ancientremediesrevived.com/book/growing

Prunus dulcis

Almond

The almond is also the name of the edible and widely cultivated seed of this tree. The fruit of the almond is a drupe, consisting of an outer hull and a hard shell with the seed, which is not a true nut, inside.

Boosts Brain Health and Heart Wellness

Mentioned in the Bible as a symbol of watchfulness and promise, almonds have been a staple in Mediterranean diets and traditional Indian medicine for centuries. The scientific name "Prunus dulcis" derives from the word 'dulcis', meaning sweet, as sweet almonds are the variety typically eaten.

Region:

While originally native to Western Asia and North Africa, almonds are now widely grown in California, Spain, Italy, Australia, and other Mediterranean countries.

Ancient Uses:

- Revered in ancient cultures, almonds were found in Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt (c. 1325 BC), suggesting their valued status in the diet of ancient Egyptians.
- Almonds have been considered a 'brain food' in traditional cultures, used to enhance cognitive functions and memory.
- Ancient practitioners recommended almonds for heart health, recognizing their potential in lowering bad cholesterol.
- Almond oil has been traditionally used for improving complexion and skin tone, being a popular ingredient in ancient cosmetics and skincare routines.

Modern Research:

- Almonds can help decrease body mass and fat mass, and improve metabolic health. They may also lower cholesterol, heart disease risk, and blood pressure.(719)
- Almond oil has anti-inflammatory, immunity-boosting, and anti-hepatotoxicity effects. It also leads to many gastrointestinal health benefits, as well as cardiovascular benefits. (720)
- Almonds are a nutritious food with health-promoting compounds, offering protection against diabetes, obesity, metabolic syndrome, and cardiovascular diseases.(721)
- Almonds contain a wide variety of proteins that the human body requires for regular function. (722)
- Almond oil has been used for centuries in complementary medicine for its health benefits, including anti-inflammatory, immunity-boosting, improved bowel transit, reduced colonic cancer risk, and cardiovascular benefits. (723)

Almond nuts

Side Effects:

Almonds are safe for most people, but excessive consumption can lead to vitamin E overdose, gastrointestinal issues, or worsen nut allergies. Consult a healthcare provider if you have nut allergies or other concerns.

Parts Used:

Seed (nut) and oil

Preparations:

Almonds can be eaten raw or roasted as a snack, used in cooking and baking, or processed into almond milk, butter, and oil. Almond oil is popular in natural skincare products and can be applied topically.

Dosage:

- Dietary: A handful of almonds (about 23 nuts) is a healthy daily portion. Almond milk or butter can be used as a dairy substitute in various recipes.
- Topical: Almond oil can be applied directly to the skin or mixed with other natural ingredients for homemade skincare products. A few drops are sufficient for a single application.

Synergies:

★★★★

Almond and Olive

Combination of olive fruit and almond skin extracts, rich in hydroxytyrosol and polyphenols, is a suitable and secure oral supplement that helps to reduce cardiovascular risk in people with high cholesterol levels in blood.(724)

★★★★

Almond and Cashew

Combination of almonds and cashew nuts have high energy, fat, folic acid, riboflavin, vitamin- C, iron and calcium. It is the most cost-effective option for lactating mothers for milk synthesis.(725)

Aloe vera

Aloe Vera

Aloe vera is a succulent plant with thick, fleshy leaves that grow up to 90 cm (35 inches) long. It produces yellow or orange flowers on tall stalks

Soothes Skin and Aids Digestion

Admired by Queens Cleopatra and Nefertiti for its beauty-boosting qualities, historical icons like Alexander the Great and Christopher Columbus used aloe vera to heal their soldiers' battle wounds. Named after "alloeh" (Arabic for "shining bitter substance") and "verus" (Latin for "true"), aloe vera remains popular today for its skin benefits.

Region:

Native to the Arabian Peninsula, Aloe vera is now widely cultivated in arid, temperate, and tropical regions worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Gut Guardian: A millennium ago, aloe's laxative properties were revered, from ancient Egyptian scrolls in 1552 B.C. to St. Hildegard of Bingen's middle-age practices combating gastric woes.
- Hair's Best Friend: Aloe, a green genie, banishes pesky dandruff and itchy scalps. Plus, it's a secret weapon for luscious, healthy locks.
- Skin Soother: Aloe has been applied topically, aiding with burns, cuts, dry skin, psoriasis, and sunburns. Even Aristotle urged Alexander the Great to capture Socotra Island for its lush aloe groves - a bountiful loot to treat battle wounds!

Modern Research:

- Aloe vera can prevent skin ulcers and expedite healing for burns, postoperative wounds, cracked nipples, genital herpes, psoriasis, chronic wounds, and pressure ulcers by enhancing skin moisture retention.(4)
- Aloe vera juice can reduce gingivitis when used as a mouthwash after scaling treatment; treat dental plaques, inflammation of the gums, and tooth decay.(5)
- A 2017 study suggests aloe vera as a viable alternative for corticosteroids in treating painful mouth lesions, with fewer side effects.(6)
- Aloe vera's bioactive compounds have been studied for their potential in cancer prevention and treatment, with comparisons to standard drugs, suggesting promising effects.(7)

Side Effects:

Overconsumption of aloe vera for digestion may result in cramps and diarrhea due to aloin, a laxative. Diabetics should consult a doctor before oral intake as it may lower blood sugar.

Aloe vera gel

Parts Used:

Gel extracted from the leaves

Preparations:

You can use Aloe vera gel topically or consume it as a supplement in capsule or liquid form. Extract it from the plant or find the recipes in this book to make creams and lotions. You can also purchase ready-made aloe vera gel at a health shop or pharmacy.

Dosage:

- Oral: Take 10-50 ml of aloe vera juice with warm water daily on an empty stomach in the morning for detoxification and productivity, or add 2 oz to your fruit juice, smoothie, or mocktail.
- Topical: Cut the aloe leaf, apply the clear gel to your face and dry skin up to four times daily for safe use. Or, use aloe vera creams, facewashes, or lotions.

Synergies:

★★★★★

Aloe vera and Tea tree oil

Aloe vera and tea tree oil mouthwashes reduce plaque, gum inflammation, and harmful bacteria as effectively as traditional options. Mix ½ cup aloe vera juice, 5-10 drops tea tree oil, and 1½ tsp baking soda in a cup of filtered water to create the mouthwash.(8)

★★★★

Aloe vera and Licorice

A hair tonic made using aloe vera (3/4) and licorice (1/4) can improve the length, growth rate, and volume of the hair.(9)

★★★★

Aloe vera and Manuka honey

Mixed aloe vera and manuka honey (2:1) in wound dressings promotes healing, prevents scarring, and offers antibacterial benefits.(10)

Pimpinella anisum

Anise

Anise is an annual herb with delicate, fern-like leaves and small, white flowers. It grows up to 60 cm (24 inches) tall and produces highly fragrant small, brown seeds.

Aids Digestion and Supports Reproductive Health

Anise, a prized spice, once utilized as currency and has a rich history dating back to 2000 B.C. Ancient Egypt recognized its healing properties, and it even appears in the Bible as a form of taxation. Today, Anise remains a culinary superstar, known for its sweet, licorice-like flavor used in baking, liqueurs, and perfumes.

Region:

Anise is native to the eastern Mediterranean region and Southwest Asia. It has since spread to Europe, the Middle East, and North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Digestive health: Anise has been a natural digestive aid for centuries to relieve symptoms of bloating, gas, and indigestion. After their feasts, the ancient Romans served spicy, sweet cakes stuffed with Anise to avoid indigestion or other stomach-related discomforts.
- Reproductive health: Anise was used to aid childbirth and stimulate milk production in breastfeeding mothers. It may also regulate menstrual cycles and relieve cramps.
- Respiratory health: Ancient physicians like Dioscorides and Hippocrates often prescribed Anise to their patients as a traditional remedy to eliminate mucus and ease coughs and colds. Dioscorides said it would "dissolve, dry, and warm," while Hippocrates declared it would clear the respiratory system.
- Acts as a sleep aid: Anise's sedative properties make it a natural sleep aid as it may relax the body and mind for a peaceful slumber.
- Treats bad breath: Anise's antimicrobial properties make it perfect for dealing with bad breath by killing mouth bacteria.

Modern Research:

- A 2016 study shows that Anise extracts and its essential oils may stop the overgrowth of gastric cancer cells, potentially combating gastric or stomach cancer.(11)
- Anise may help reduce the symptoms of premenstrual syndrome or PMS in women when taken regularly before and during their periods.(12)
- Several studies on Anise seeds report various beneficial properties such as analgesic or pain-killing capabilities, anticonvulsant, antifungal, antimicrobial, antioxidant, antiviral, and muscle relaxant. It is beneficial for period cramps and menopausal hot flashes.(13)

Parts used:

Seeds

Anise oil

Preparations:

- Use anise oil and seeds as flavoring in soups and curries.
- Take anise supplements in capsule or tincture form.
- Store anise oil and powder for up to four weeks.

Dosage:

- Anise Extract: Between 110 and 330 mg of anise extract can be taken orally for up to four weeks.
- Anise oil: Try 0.1–0.2 mL daily.
- Anise seeds: Take 1-2 teaspoons of anise seed powder daily for up to 2 months for medicinal use.

Synergies:

★★★★

Anise, Fennel, and Celery

A combination of anise, fennel, and celery seed extracts (10% each) in a syrup may be beneficial for PCOS treatment, a condition that affects women's ovaries.(14)

★★★★

Anise and Chamomile

A combination of chamomile and star anise infusions seems to have a positive effect on the gut and could be used as an alternative treatment to traditional medicines for diarrhea.(15)

★★★

Anise and Thyme

Thyme and anise essential oils, along with methanolic extracts, possess antibacterial properties, making them effective against bacterial infections.(16)

Apple Cider Vinegar

Enhances Digestion and Controls Blood Sugar

Apple cider vinegar, crafted from fermented apple juice, boasts a tangy flavor and strong scent. Through fermentation, it gains acetic acid, beneficial bacteria, and trace minerals like potassium.

Hippocrates, the father of medicine, used it for wound cleaning over two thousand years ago. Its popularity soared in the 1970s in America, where it was touted for weight loss and other health benefits. Today, it's a staple in many health enthusiasts' diets for its role in improving digestion and regulating blood sugar levels.

Region:

Apple cider vinegar is produced worldwide, with its quality and flavor varying based on the apple varieties used and the production methods.

Ancient Uses:

- Apple cider vinegar has been traditionally used as:
- Digestive Tonic: Known to aid digestion, it's been used to alleviate stomach aches and bloating.
- Blood Sugar Regulator: Its ability to moderate insulin levels has made it popular for those managing diabetes or trying to stabilize blood sugar.
- Weight Loss Aid: Often included in diets for its potential to increase satiety and reduce appetite.

Modern Research:

- Apple vinegar may have beneficial health effects, such as weight loss, lowering blood glucose levels, and reducing the risk of heart diseases.(771)

Side Effects:

Consuming apple cider vinegar in large amounts can lead to tooth enamel erosion, throat irritation, and may interact with certain medications. It should be diluted before consumption.

Parts used:

Fermented juice of crushed apples

Preparations:

- Apple cider vinegar can be consumed diluted in water or used as a salad dressing. It's also popularly mixed with honey or lemon for additional health benefits. Topically, it can be used in diluted form as a skin toner or hair rinse.

Dosage:

- Oral: 1-2 tablespoons diluted in a large glass of water, consumed before meals for digestive benefits.
- Topical: Dilute with water (1 part vinegar to 3 parts water) for use on skin or hair.

Fresh apples and apple cider vinegar

Synergies:

★★★★

Apple cider vinegar, Honey, Garlic, Ginger, and Lemon

Herbal extract prepared from apple cider vinegar, honey, garlic, ginger, and lemon has been shown to have cardio-protective effects in animal models with high cholesterol and triglycerides in their blood.(772)

Choose organic, unfiltered apple cider vinegar with "the mother" for maximum health benefits. This natural mix of yeast and bacteria boosts its nutrient profile.

Arnica Montana

Arnica

Arnica is a perennial herb with round, hairy stems that can grow up to two feet. Its yellow-orange flowers are similar to daisies. Its leaves are bright green; the lower leaves have rounded tips, and the upper leaves are slightly hairy and toothed.

Alleviates Bruises and Reduces Inflammation

Arnica's soft, lambswool-like leaves led people to refer to it simply as "arni", the Greek word for lamb. Arnica, a member of the sunflower family , is also called "leopard's bane," "mountain tobacco," and "wolfsbane." Arnica gained fame in 16th-century German folk remedies, treating injuries, bruises, inflammation, and skin problems.

Region:

Originating from European meadows, Arnica is now found worldwide, including in North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Arnica heals bruises, sprains, and other injuries. It can stimulate circulation and reduce swelling.
- Even literacy legend Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—aka "the Shakespeare of Germany"—appreciated the analgesic properties of arnica. He regularly brewed Arnica tea, which helped him recover from a heart attack. He lived 83 years, way beyond the average life expectancy (30 years) of German men in the early 18th century.
- Arnica reduces muscle soreness and inflammation, easing the lives of arthritis and fibromyalgia patients.
- Arnica helps in wound healing while keeping scars in check, thanks to its antimicrobial properties that prevent infection and promote healing.

Modern Research:

- A 2020 study supports the traditional use of Arnica to treat skin issues. Its ointment could reduce inflammation and oxidative damage caused by acute UVB radiation.(807)
- Arnica extract is rich in antioxidants that can prevent the damage caused by free radicals and help our brain work better by slowing down certain processes that can cause Alzheimer's disease.(808)
- When Arnica preparations are applied to your skin, the active compounds can penetrate through the top layer and reduce inflammation, providing relief from inflammatory skin conditions. Evidence indicates that Arnica could be an alternative to pain-relievers.(17)
- An ethanolic preparation of equal parts of arnica, calendula, St. John's wort, and comfrey extracts (diluted 1:100) has been shown to have faster wound healing (a homeopathic medicine named Similasan® Arnica plus Spray).(18)

Side Effects:

- Arnica can cause serious side effects such as gastrointestinal upset, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain when taken orally due to helenalin, a toxin that can be poisonous in large amounts.

Parts used:

Fresh or dried flower heads

Preparations:

- You can apply it topically as cream, ointment, or oil.
- Do not take it orally without medical supervision.

Arnica is mostly used as an oil or ointment due to its oral toxicity

Dosage:

- Topical use: Apply a small amount of Arnica cream, oil, or ointment on the affected area as needed. Just don't use it on open wounds without a doctor's advice.
- □ Homeopathic use: Use store-bought Arnica tablets or supplements as indicated by the product label, while also consulting your doctor to ensure your safety.

Synergies:

★★★★

Arnica and Hydroxyethyl salicylate

Arnica combined with hydroxyethyl salicylate (HES, an active ingredient in pain-relief patches) in a preparation called Sportino Acute Spray, shows significantly greater analgesic effects on sports volunteers. The combination can therefore be used as an effective painkiller.(19)

Eruca sativa

Arugula

Enhances Bone Health and Aids Digestion

Arugula is a leafy green vegetable with a peppery flavor, belonging to the Brassicaceae family. It has long, serrated leaves and is commonly used in salads. Arugula is rich in vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin K.

Known since Roman times, arugula was not only a popular salad ingredient but also used for its seeds' oil and aphrodisiac properties. Its name derives from the Latin word "eruca," which means "caterpillar," likely referencing the plant's caterpillar-like shape. In ancient texts, arugula was often associated with health and vitality.

Region:

Native to the Mediterranean region, arugula is now widely cultivated globally, especially in Europe, North America, and parts of Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Bone Strengthener: Rich in Vitamin K, arugula has been traditionally used to support bone health and prevent osteoporosis.
- Digestive Aid: Its peppery leaves are known for stimulating the digestive system and aiding in gut health.
- Vitality Booster: Historically, arugula has been consumed to boost energy and vitality, especially in Roman and Egyptian cultures.

Modern Research:

- Purple arugula leaves provide many beneficial nutrients, mainly high levels of anthocyanins.(726, 727)
- Arugula is high in vitamins A, K, C, antioxidants, phytonutrients, calcium, dietary fiber, potassium, sulfur, and iron, and is low in calories.(728)
- Arugula has many health-promoting properties and has been used as a digestive aid, diuretic agent, kidney and skin disorder cure, and aphrodisiac since ancient times.(729)

Side Effects:

Generally safe when consumed in moderate amounts; however, large quantities might irritate the digestive tract. People with thyroid conditions should consult a doctor before consuming large amounts due to its goitrogenic properties.

Parts Used:

Leaves and seeds

Fresh arugula leaves

Preparations:

Arugula is most commonly eaten fresh in salads but can also be lightly cooked and added to pasta, soups, and sauces. The seeds can be pressed to extract oil, which is used in culinary and medicinal applications.

Dosage:

- Culinary: Incorporate fresh arugula leaves into salads, sandwiches, or as a pizza topping for a peppery flavor. There is no specific dosage, but it is generally consumed in moderate amounts as part of a balanced diet.
- Topical: Arugula seed oil can be used topically for its soothing properties, though it is more commonly used in culinary contexts.

Synergies:

★★★★

Arugula and Mild greens

Due to its peppery flavor, you can mix arugula with other milder greens, such as watercress and romaine.(730)

★★★★

Arugula and Olive oil

Sauté arugula in a small amount of extra virgin olive oil and season with freshly ground black pepper and freshly grated Parmesan cheese. Eat it as a side dish or top a baked potato to utilize the synergistic digestive effects of this combination.(731)

Withania somnifera

Ashwagandha

Stress Relief and Immune Booster

Ashwagandha is a shrub that grows up to 1.5 meters (5 feet) tall. It has oval-shaped leaves and produces small, greenish-yellow flowers and small, orange-red berries.

Ashwagandha, also known as 'Indian Ginseng' or 'Winter Cherry,' is a prized herb in Ayurvedic medicine, often called the 'King of all Ayurvedic herbs.' This unique plant aids in managing stress and promoting mental and physical strength. Its Sanskrit name, meaning 'horse smell,' refers to its roots' strong, pungent, earthy aroma.

Region:

Ashwagandha is native to India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka but is now widely cultivated worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Ayurveda is a 3,000-year-old traditional medicinal system from India that describes Ashwagandha as a "Rasayana," or a substance that boosts your health and promotes longevity. It's also considered to be a "rejuvenating herb".
- Ashwagandha has been used in Chinese medicine for a long time as well. In Pinyin (the official romanization system for Standard Mandarin Chinese in China), Ashwagandha is called Shiu Qie.

Modern Research:

- Some studies have shown that Ashwagandha leaf extract might be able to selectively fight certain types of cancer cells.(809)
- Ashwagandha root extract has been shown to be safe and tolerable for managing body weight in adults under chronic stress.(20)
- Ashwagandha is rich in antioxidants. It can help with stress and inflammation and keep your immune system stronger by fighting free radicals. (810)
- A study suggests that Ashwgandha might help reduce cancer-related fatigue and improve the quality of life for breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.(21)

Side Effects:

- Taking too much may cause stomach upset or diarrhea.

Parts used:

Roots and leaves

Preparations:

- Decoction and Tea: Boil 1 tsp dried root in a cup of water for 20-45 mins for tea. Mix powdered root with spices such as cinnamon or ginger. Add almond or regular milk for a traditional Indian drink, or blend with ghee or honey.
- Tincture: Soak dried roots in high-proof alcohol. Take 1/4 tsp thrice daily.

Dosage:

Ashwagandha is safe at 300 mg doses twice daily.

Ashwagandha roots, leaves, and berries

Synergies:

★★★★

Ashwagandha and Beta-glucan

Combining beta-glucan (a fiber in oats or barley grains) with ashwagandha can enhance your immune system and reduce stress by making certain immune processes work better together, providing a more powerful boost to your immune system.(22)

★★★★★

Ashwagandha and Punarnava

Taking 12 grams of granules of Ashwagandha and Punarnava (equal quantity) twice a day before meals, appears to be a practical, safe, and cost-effective approach to rejuvenation, slow aging, and longevity.(23)

Asparagus officinalis

Asparagus

Asparagus is a perennial flowering plant with tall, slender stalks and tiny, scale-like leaves. It is known for its delicate flavor and is available in green, white, and purple varieties. Spears can grow up to 40 cm (16 inches) in length.

Supports Kidney Function and Aids Digestion

Asparagus was prized by ancient civilizations like the Greeks and Romans for its unique taste and medicinal properties. The name comes from the Greek word “asparagos”, meaning “sprout” or “shoot.” Today, asparagus is recognized for its health benefits, particularly in supporting kidney health and digestion.

Region:

Originally cultivated in the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor, asparagus is now grown in temperate climates worldwide, with major producers including China, Peru, and the United States.

Ancient Uses:

- Kidney Cleanser: Ancient Egyptians and Greeks used asparagus for its diuretic properties, helping in cleansing the kidneys and urinary tract.
- Digestive Aid: Romans valued asparagus for its fiber content, aiding in digestion and intestinal health.
- Aphrodisiac: The Greeks and Romans believed in the aphrodisiac qualities of asparagus, often included in love potions and remedies.
- Wound Healing: In traditional Chinese medicine, asparagus was used for its anti-inflammatory properties to aid in wound healing and reduce infections.

Modern Research:

- Wild asparagus has high levels of vitamins, chlorophylls, carotenoids, and phenolics, and therefore features a plethora of potential health benefits.(714)
- Asparagus contains various compounds such as polysaccharides, polyphenols, anthocyanins and saponins, which exhibit anti-cancer, anti-tumor, antioxidant, immunomodulatory, hypoglycemic, anti-hypertensive, and anti-epileptic effects.(715)
- Asparagus root extract contains several bioactive compounds with many potential health benefits, such as antioxidant activities.(716)
- Asparagus has antitumor, hepatoprotective, antioxidant, hypocholesterolemic, neuroprotective, immunoprotective, antimutagenic, and hypoglycemic activities.(717)

Side Effects:

- Asparagus is generally safe, but its high purine content can aggravate gout symptoms in susceptible individuals. Some people may experience an allergic reaction or noticeable urine odor after consumption.

Parts used:

Spears and, less commonly, the root

Preparations:

- Asparagus can be steamed, grilled, roasted, or sautéed. It’s a versatile vegetable that pairs well with a variety of dishes. The spears can also be pickled or used in soups. For a unique preparation, see the asparagus recipes in this book.

Dosage:

- Oral: Include a serving of 5-8 asparagus spears in your meals 2-3 times a week for optimal health benefits. No standard dosage for medicinal purposes.
- Topical: Not typically used topically in traditional or modern remedies.

Fresh asparagus spears

Synergies;

★★★

Asparagus and Parsley

A combination of dried Asparagus roots and parsley leaves (Asparagus-P®) stimulates kidney cell metabolism and inhibits inflammation-mediating cells, potentially supporting kidney function without affecting electrolyte balance.(718)

Astragalus membranaceus

Astragalus

Astragalus is a perennial herb that has small, purple flowers and produces long, narrow leaves. The roots of the astragalus plant are used medicinally.

Immune Booster and Cardiovascular Support

Astragalus is a powerhouse for your immune system and vitality. Ancient Chinese revered it for enhancing "chi" (life energy) and "wei qi" (immunity), promoting increased energy and vigor. It effectively reduces stress for mental and physical resilience. Its name stems from Greek "astragalos" for its root's bone-like appearance.

Region:

Astragalus is native to China but is now found in other parts of the world, including North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Astragalus was an important part of traditional Chinese medicine and was even mentioned in Shennong's Herbal Classics, an ancient text on agriculture and medicinal plants.
- In ancient China, astragalus was called "Huang qi" or "yellow leader" because of its yellow roots. People used this "chi" as herbal tonic to treat chronic diseases and boost their immune systems
- Native American tribes, such as the Lakotas, used ground-up astragalus root to relieve chronic pain.

Modern Research:

- Astragalus is a potent compound known for its protective effects on organs like the heart, lungs, kidneys, and brain. It fights inflammation, prevents cell damage, and shows may also have benefits such as brain protection, liver support, and the ability to combat both cancer and diabetes.(24)
- A 2011 study found that Astragalus can prevent relapse of asthma in children.(811)
- A 2010 study found that astragalus-based herbal treatments in addition to standard chemotherapy improved the health of lung cancer patients.(812)
- Astragalus root and its main active compound, formononetin, can promote healthier skin by strengthening its natural defense against damaging agents and encouraging skin cell growth. (25)

Side Effects:

Side effects of Astragalus are unknown, as it is often combined with other herbs.

Parts used:

Roots

The roots can be dried and chopped up for later usage

Preparations:

- Astragalus comes in capsules or powder and consumed as tea or tincture. For a tincture, infuse astragalus root in high-proof alcohol for 6-8 weeks, shaking occasionally. You can add 1-3 tsp of the powder to soups or smoothies.

Dosage:

You can include 9 to 30 grams of astragalus extract in your daily diet. However, consult a doctor if you plan to take it as a supplement.

Synergies:

★★★

Astragalus and Female ginseng

An in vitro study showed that a combination of Astragalus and female ginseng extracts could help protect kidney cells from damage caused by oxidative stress. This protection is achieved by balancing proteins that affect cell survival and by reducing inflammation.(26)

★★★★

Astragalus and Dangshen

Oral administration of a combination of Astragalus and Dangshen extracts helps balance the immune system, reduce colon damage, and promote the growth of beneficial gut bacteria.(28)

★★★★

Astragalus and Dandelion

Astragalus and Dandelion root extracts offer potential for diabetes prevention and treatment, thanks to the ability to manage blood sugar levels.(29)

Persea americana

Avocado

A tall evergreen tree with glossy green leaves, blooming with small greenish-yellow flowers. The avocado fruit is an irresistible green-skinned, fleshy fruit.

Nutritional Powerhouse, Heart Health

Avocado, a creamy superfruit beloved in culinary and wellness circles. Its versatility, from guacamole to smoothies, is matched by its impressive health benefits. Loaded with heart-healthy fats, fiber, and over 20 vitamins and minerals, it's a nutritional powerhouse.

Region:

Native to south-central Mexico, the avocado tree now proudly stands in many parts of the world with a tropical or Mediterranean climate. Think California, Florida, Central and South America, Africa, and parts of Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- The Aztecs and Mayans highly valued avocados for their diet, believing they gave strength and energy. Besides being food, they also used it as natural medicine for its rich nutrients.
- Historical evidence suggests that the Ancient Egyptians used avocados for cosmetic purposes. Due to its moisturizing properties, they used the fruit in their hair and skin treatments, much like we do today.
- The Aztecs symbolically linked avocados to fertility and love because they grow in pairs on trees. They were considered so sexually powerful that virgins were reportedly kept indoors to protect them during the avocado harvest season.

Modern research:

- Avocado leaf extracts exhibit effectiveness as antioxidants, fight harmful radicals, while also supporting brain health.(392)
- Avocado by-products, such as the peel and seed, contain powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.(393)
- Avocados reduce cardiovascular disease risk, support weight loss, and improve cognitive function, with their unique combination of unsaturated fat, prebiotic fiber, low energy density, and carotenoid absorption benefiting overall health.(394)
- Several phytochemicals in avocado oil have been linked to prevention of cancer, age-related macular degeneration, and cardiovascular diseases.(395)

Parts used:

Fruit, leaves, and seeds

Fresh avocado leaves and fruit

Preparations:

- Direct Consumption: Simply slice open the fruit, remove the pit, and enjoy the creamy flesh directly or in salads, sandwiches, smoothies, and more.
- Avocado Oil: Extracted from the fruit, avocado oil is ideal for cooking and is also used in skin and hair care products. Use one or two tablespoons for salad dressings!
- Seed Tea: Traditional practices often involve drying and steeping the seeds to make a therapeutic tea.
- Supplement: Avocado supplements can be taken to reap various benefits, in doses ranging from 300 to 600 mg daily.

Synergies:

★★★★

Avocado and Pomegranate

In a 2021 study, extracts from pomegranate peels, avocado peels, and avocado seeds exhibited antimicrobial and antifungal properties against food-borne microorganisms.(396)

★★★

Avocado and Pumpkin

Avocado pear seed and fluted pumpkin leaf homogenates, when combined, protection for the liver when used alongside anti-tuberculosis drugs, which can induce liver toxicity.(397)

★★★★★

Avocado and Soybean

A 1:2 combination of unsaponified avocado oil and soybean oil effectively treats bone and joint pain, available as Piascledine 300mg, with 100mg of unsaponifiable avocado oil and 200mg of unsaponifiable soybean oil.(398)

Balsamic Vinegar

Balsamic vinegar is a concentrated, and intensely flavored vinegar from Italy. Made from grape must, it's aged in wooden barrels for years to develop its flavor.

Boosts Digestive Health and Reduces Blood Sugar Spikes

With roots in the ancient Roman world, balsamic vinegar was first mentioned in medieval Italian records. Esteemed by the elites for its unique taste and health benefits, it was often a luxurious gift among royalty. Today, balsamic vinegar is recognized for its potential in aiding digestion and moderating blood glucose levels.

Region:

True traditional balsamic vinegar hails from the Modena and Reggio Emilia regions of Italy, where the climate and local grape varieties contribute to its distinct character.

Ancient Uses:

- Digestive Tonic: The Romans consumed balsamic vinegar to help with digestion. Its acetic acid aids in breaking down food and enhancing nutrient absorption.
- Blood Sugar Control: Its low glycemic index was appreciated for moderating blood sugar spikes, making it a preferred condiment for diabetics in the olden days.
- Antimicrobial Agent: Its antibacterial and antiviral properties were used to treat wounds and infections.

Modern research:

- Vinegars provide various health benefits due to their polyphenols, micronutrients, and bioactive compounds, including antimicrobial, antidiabetic, antioxidative, antiobesity, and antihypertensive effects.
- Balsamic vinegar has the highest antioxidant activity found in fruit vinegars.(736)
- Balsamic vinegar improves digestive function, glycemic response to carbohydrate-rich meals, appetite stimulation, and reduces hyperlipidemia and obesity.(737)

Side Effects:

Consumed in moderation, balsamic vinegar is safe. However, excessive consumption can lead to acid reflux, digestive discomfort, and tooth enamel erosion due to its acidity.

Parts used:

Fermented grape must (freshly crushed grape juice with all the skins, seeds, and stems)

Dark, concentrated color of balsamic vinegar

Preparations:

- Balsamic vinegar can be drizzled over salads, cheeses, fruits, and meats. It's also a popular component in marinades, reductions, and dressings. The aged variety is often enjoyed on its own as a small digestif.

Dosage:

- Culinary: Use 1-2 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar in cooking or as a dressing daily. It's a healthy, flavorful addition to many dishes.
- Medicinal: For digestive health, consume a small amount (about 1 teaspoon) before or after meals.
- For blood sugar regulation, include it in meals containing carbohydrates. Always consult with a healthcare provider for specific health concerns or before starting a new dietary regimen.

Synergies:

★★★★

Balsamic vinegar and Olive oil

Balsamic vinegar can be mixed with extra virgin olive oil. Drizzle this mixture over salads to enhance their taste and nutrition.(834)

Try adding balsamic vinegar to carbohydrate-rich foods. This can slow down the absorption of carbs.

Ocimum basilicum

Basil

Basil is an annual herb that grows up to 90 cm (36 inches) tall. It has green, oval-shaped leaves and produces small, white, or purple flowers.

Digestive Aid and Respiratory Health Enhancer

With a dollop of sweetness, basil jazzes up Italian and Thai feasts, tickling your taste buds with its aromatic twist. Besides enhancing flavors, it also supports your digestive and respiratory system with its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Basil is the first herb in Grandma's pouch as a centuries-old secret to wellness.

Region:

Basil is native to tropical regions of Asia and Africa but is now cultivated in many regions worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- With a history spanning over 4,000 years, basil was believed to possess special powers. Some thought it could protect against snake bites and "cheer the spirit" and "clear the brain".
- Egyptians used basil in mummification; Greeks referred to it as "basileus phuton,". It was associated with the discovery of the Holy Cross.
- Indians consider it sacred as Tulsi, using it near temples for protection. In Crete, basil is used to ward off evil near windows.
- Basil's anti-inflammatory properties were used to alleviate bloating and indigestion.
- Basil was employed to enhance the immune system and combat infections.
- Basil oil was often used as a natural remedy for joint pain.
- Basil's cinnamic acid clears respiratory tract mucus, easing coughs and cold symptoms.
- Topical basil application has been used to reduce skin inflammation, redness, and promotes wound healing.

Modern Research:

- A 2006 study suggests basil extract might also be useful in treating high cholesterol due to its antioxidant and hypolipidemic properties, which can help prevent heart disease.(813)
- A 2016 study on basil showed that it is a promising antifungal agent.(814)
- A 2014 study showed that Basil leaves have the potential to fight cancer because of the antioxidants and other special compounds they contain.(30)
- Results of a 2020 study indicate that Basil extract exhibits anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antiparasitic properties and supports the traditional usage of this plant.(31)

Side Effects:

Prolonged consumption of basil in high amounts, may raise the risk of developing liver cancer due to its estragole content.

Parts used:

Leaves and stems

Preparations:

Basil is available in capsules or powder, and can be made into tea or tincture.

Dosage:

10g of selenium enriched basil leaves meets recommended selenium intake for humans.

Fresh and dried basil leaves

Synergies:

★★★★★

Basil, Citronella, and Thyme

Basil, citronella, and thyme essential oils are used together in diffusers or inhaled to help with congestion or respiratory issues. This combination also shows a calming and refreshing effects on the mind and body, reducing stress and anxiety.(32)

★★★★★

Basil, Cedarwood, and Thyme

Basil, cedarwood, and thyme oil can be used in massage oils for their analgesic properties; it can help ease muscle tension and relieve minor aches and pains.(33)

The lycopene in tomatoes is fat-soluble. When paired with basil, which contains natural oils, it enhances the absorption of this antioxidant.

Laurus nobilis

Bay Laurel

Bay laurel is an evergreen tree with glossy, leathery leaves and small yellow flowers. It has been cultivated for thousands of years, valued for its aromatic qualities and uses in various traditions.

Antiseptic, Anti-inflammatory, and Digestive Benefits

Bay laurel, often associated with honor and achievement in ancient Greece, is not just a symbol but a valuable medicinal plant. Its leaves and essential oil have been used for healing and culinary purposes.

Region:

Native to the Mediterranean region.

Ancient Uses:

- In ancient Greece, bay laurel was more than a symbol; it was used for its medicinal properties. The Greeks recognized its usefulness in treating digestive issues, wounds, and respiratory problems. It was also a part of religious rituals, symbolizing victory and honor.

Modern Research:

- Bay leaf has anti-inflammatory properties and can be used to treat cancer, gastric problems, muscles and joint pain, and open wounds.(578)
- Bay laurel leaf extracts have beneficial health effects due to various biological activities, including flavonoids, phenolic acids, tannins, and lignans.(579)
- Bay leaves have antidiarrheal, anti-inflammatory, and antidiabetic activity, and are used for the improvement of the immune system.(580)

Side Effects:

Bay laurel is generally considered safe, but in rare cases, it may cause skin irritation when used topically. Ingesting the oil directly can be toxic and should be avoided.

Parts used:

Primarily the leaves and essential oil

Dosage:

For culinary uses, a few leaves are sufficient to flavor dishes. As a tea for digestive issues, 1-2 leaves steeped in boiling water for 5-10 minutes is recommended. The essential oil should be used with caution, diluted, and never ingested without professional guidance.

Fresh bay leaves

Synergies:

★★★★

Bay leaf, Clove, and Thyme

Bay leaf with cloves and thyme is used to form tomato sherbet with synergistic antioxidant and antibacterial effects.(581)

★★★★

Bay leaves, Celery, Cloves, Peppercorns, Parsley, and Thyme

Bay leaves with whole celery seeds, whole cloves, peppercorns, dried parsley, and thyme can be used in bouquet garni. Bouquet garni (French for “garnished bouquet”) is a bundle of herbs usually tied with string and mainly used to prepare soup, stock, casseroles, and various stews.(582)

Monarda spp.

Bee Balm

Bee balm is a fragrant perennial herb with vibrant white and pink to red, purple, and lavender flowers. It typically grows to about 2-4 feet tall, with lance-shaped and toothed leaves

Natural Aid for Congestion, Digestion, and Skin Health

Bee balm, with its striking blooms and aromatic presence, has been a staple in both ornamental gardens and herbal medicine cabinets. It's celebrated for its versatility - from serving as a natural remedy for various ailments to adding flavor and fragrance in culinary applications.

Region:

Native to North America, bee balm thrives in a variety of environments across the continent.

Ancient Uses:

- Historically, Native American tribes revered bee balm for its medicinal properties. They utilized it to treat skin disorders, wounds, and infections due to its antiseptic and antibacterial qualities.
- It was also a common remedy for colds, fevers, and was used as a digestive aid. The Oswego tribe famously brewed bee balm leaves into tea, which was later adopted by European settlers, giving rise to its alternative name, Oswego tea.

Modern Research:

- All parts of the bee balm plant exhibit notable efficacy in addressing digestive issues, owing to its carminative properties that effectively counteract the accumulation of gas in the body.(836)
- Acting as a diuretic, bee balm provides additional relief for digestive problems by promoting the elimination of excess fluids.(837)
- Bee balm works as a natural antiemetic that treats nausea as well as vomiting. This herb mainly works on the gut and helps to digest food. It also shows results on the brain by blocking symptoms from reaching the vomiting center. (838)
- The febrifuge properties of bee balm make it a valuable choice for reducing fever, highlighting its historical use in fever reduction.(839)

Side Effects:

Generally well-tolerated, bee balm can occasionally cause mild skin irritation when applied topically. Ingestion in large quantities might lead to stomach upset. As with any herb, individuals with specific allergies should exercise caution.

Parts used:

The leaves and flowers are utilized for their medicinal and aromatic properties.

Dosage:

For teas, steep 1-2 teaspoons of dried bee balm leaves in boiling water for 5-10 minutes. For topical use, infuse the leaves in a carrier oil and apply to the skin as needed. Always start with small amounts to test for any allergic reactions.

Bee balm flower

Synergies:

★★★★

Bee balm in Pesto

Utilize the synergy of herbs in a pesto by adding a few fresh bee balm leaves to a combination of basil, parsley, oregano, mint, or lemon flavored herbs along with some garlic, olive oil, and walnuts. Add it to your pasta, meat, or salad. (840)

Beta vulgaris

Beet

Beets, or beetroot, are root vegetables known for their deep crimson color and earthy taste. They grow underground with leafy tops above the surface. Typically, they are round or cylindrical in shape, and their size varies.

Enhances Stamina and Purifies Blood

Revered by the Romans as a blood purifier and a natural aphrodisiac, beets have a rich history. The vegetable's name originates from the Latin word "beta", symbolizing its prominence in ancient diets. Today, beets are not only prized for their nutritional value but also for their role in natural remedies and traditional medicine.

Region:

Beets are believed to have originated in the Mediterranean region. They are now cultivated globally, thriving in cool environments suitable for root crops.

Ancient Uses:

- Energy Booster: Ancient Greeks consumed beets to boost energy and stamina, especially athletes before competitions.
- Liver Detoxifier: Romans used beetroot as a treatment for fevers and constipation, recognizing its detoxifying effects on the liver.
- Blood Pressure Regulator: Traditional healers used beets to lower blood pressure and purify the blood.
- Immunity Strengthening: In Medieval Europe, beets were a common remedy to strengthen the immune system and combat fatigue.

Modern Research:

- Beetroot juice is associated with cardiometabolic health benefits and enhanced exercise performance through the production of nitric oxide. (709)
- Beetroot has various anticancer, antioxidant, and antiinflammatory benefits, along with improved cardiovascular health and a reduction in blood pressure. (710)
- Beetroot's antioxidant activity and total phenolic and anthocyanin content remain unchanged after cooking, but pressure-cooking results in lower carotenoid levels, which implies that it is best eaten raw.(711)

Side Effects:

Consuming beets in large amounts may cause beeturia, a harmless condition where urine turns pink or red. People prone to kidney stones should limit their intake due to oxalates.

Parts used:

Root and leaves

Whole beet plant

Preparations:

Beets can be enjoyed raw, cooked, or pickled. The roots are great in salads, soups, and juices, while the leaves can be cooked like spinach. You can also find recipes in this book for making beetroot powder, which can be added to smoothies and baking.

Dosage:

- Oral: Consume half a cup of cooked beets or drink 8 oz of beet juice daily to experience cardiovascular and endurance benefits. Raw beet salads or smoothies are also beneficial.
- Topical: Not typically applied topically, but beetroot-infused products can be used for their antioxidant properties, following the product instructions.

Synergies:

★★★★★

Beet with Mint or Ginger

Combinations of mint or ginger with beet demonstrate enhanced antioxidant activity and improved inhibition of lipid oxidation. Beet and mint or ginger can be added to Sandesh (a milk-based product similar to cottage cheese).(712)

★★★★

Beet and Carrot

The potassium present in both carrots and beetroot supports heart function and helps regulate blood pressure. The antioxidants in the juice help reduce inflammation and aids in cardiovascular health.(713)

Roast or steam beets to retain more nutrients. They're high in nitrates, beneficial for blood pressure regulation.

Vaccinium myrtillus

Bilberry

A low-growing shrub with branches adorned with tiny, bell-shaped flowers and deep purple berries.

Vision Support and Antioxidant Rich

Often confused with blueberries, these dark berries are packed with potent antioxidants and health-enhancing compounds. Beyond their tart taste, bilberries are a nutritional powerhouse, beloved by herbalists, nutritionists, and berry enthusiasts.

Region:

Bilberry is found in the cool, temperate climates of Northern Europe, North America, and Asia. A close relative of the blueberry, it thrives in the acidic, nutrient-poor soils of the Northern Hemisphere.

Ancient Uses:

- During World War II, British Royal Air Force pilots consumed Bilberry jam, believing it enhanced their night vision for flying missions. This was attributed to Bilberry's rich content, which supports the regeneration of rhodopsin, a pigment aiding night vision.
- In European folk medicine, bilberries, rich in tannins, were used to treat digestive issues, especially diarrhea. Their astringent properties helped tighten intestinal tissues and reduce inflammation, easing diarrhea symptoms.
- Ancient herbalists used bilberry for its high anthocyanin content and anti-inflammatory and antioxidant benefits. They made medicinal teas and tinctures from its fruit and leaves to treat kidney and urinary tract infections, reduce inflammation, and improve blood circulation.

Modern research:

- Bilberry inclusion in high-fat diets improves liver metabolism and serum lipid levels, potentially preventing obesity. (399)
- Bilberry extract consumption can promote healthy aging by regulating gut microbiota and promoting intestinal barrier function, therefore allowing for better gastrointestinal health. (400)
- Bilberry extracts show potential for reducing trehalose levels in a high-sugar diet, potentially benefiting individuals with metabolic syndrome, as well as regulating blood sugar levels. (401)

Bilberry leaves and berries

Parts used:

Berries and leaves

Preparations:

- Juice/Extract: The ripe berries are pressed to extract the juice, which can be consumed directly or used to create bilberry extract, up to 60 ml per day.
- Tea: Both the berries and leaves can be used to brew flavorful and healthy tea, up to two cups daily.
- Capsules and Tablets: These provide a convenient way to get your daily dose of Bilberry goodness, with recommended doses up to 480 mg daily.
- Jams and jellies: Bilberries are delicious in jams and jellies, providing both flavor and health benefits.

Synergies:

★★★★

Bilberry, Little hogweed, and Barberry

A combination of bilberry, little hogweed (common purslane), and barberry extracts has demonstrated the ability to inhibit the growth of cancer cells.(402)

★★★

Bilberry, Black chokeberry, Red currant, Green tea, and Sweet flag

Quince juice in combination with bilberry, black chokeberry, red currant juice, green tea and sweet flag rhizome or apple pomace extracts display synergistic activity against bacteria that cause stomach infections, namely Helicobacter pylori.(403)

Actaea racemosa

Black Cohosh

A tall, elegant perennial with large, compound leaves and a striking, candle-like spray of white flowers that bloom in the summer.

Menopause Symptom Relief and Women's Health Support

Black Cohosh offers natural relief for women's health. Trusted by Native Americans and modern herbalists, it balances hormones and eases menopausal discomforts, symbolizing feminine resilience and vitality.

Region:

Wander through the rich, shady woodlands of eastern North America, and you'll encounter the beautiful, towering black cohosh. Its natural habitat extends from southern Ontario to Georgia and as far west as Missouri and Arkansas.

Ancient Uses:

- Menopause and Women's Health: Native American tribes originally used it for various "women's problems," such as menstrual cramps and to ease childbirth. Today, black cohosh is commonly taken for hot flashes, night sweats, sleep disturbances, and other menopause symptoms.
- Traditional uses of black cohosh also include relief from rheumatism (arthritis and muscle pain). Its anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties were exploited to help with these conditions.
- Native American tribes traditionally used black cohosh as a diuretic, promoting the health and function of kidneys. They believed that it helped 'cleanse' the body by promoting urination.
- Black cohosh has been used to help with respiratory symptoms such as coughs due to its antispasmodic effects.

Modern research:

- Black cohosh is effective in reducing hot flash severity and improving quality of life for postmenopausal women.(404)
- Black cohosh has potential chemopreventive and anticancer properties, inhibiting the growth of breast, prostate, and oral cancer cells, and can be potentially combined with chemotherapy drugs for cancer prevention or therapy.(405)

Parts used:

Roots and rhizomes

Preparations:

- Decoction: The roots and rhizomes can be boiled to make a therapeutic decoction or tea. Drink 1-2 cups of Black Cohosh tea daily.
- Tincture: A concentrated liquid extract, or tincture, provides a potent and easy-to-use form of Black Cohosh. Typically, 2-4 ml of Black Cohosh tincture is taken daily.
- Capsules/Tablets: These offer a convenient way to harness the benefits of Black Cohosh, especially for long-term use. ollow the manufacturer's instructions or consult with a healthcare provider.
- Creams/Ointments: Black Cohosh is sometimes used in topical applications for skin conditions and muscle pain.

Dry black cohosh roots

Synergies:

★★★★

Black cohosh and St. John's wort

Black cohosh extract is commonly combined with St John 's wort for the treatment of menopausal symptoms, such as hot flashes. (406)

★★★★

Black cohosh and Vitamin C

The combination of black cohosh and vitamin C effectively improves hormonal regulation and oxidative response in PCOS animal models, without causing hepatotoxicity. (407)

Lens culinaris

Black Lentils

Black lentils, also known as beluga lentils, are small, glossy black legumes that resemble caviar. They have a rich, earthy flavor and hold their shape well when cooked, making them a popular choice in salads and soups.

Promotes Heart Health and Controls Blood Sugar

Black lentils are prized for their high protein content and nutritional value. Ancient Indian texts mention lentils as a healing food, and they were a key ingredient in Roman and Egyptian cuisines. Their name, from the Latin 'lens', reflects their lens-like shape. Today, they are celebrated for managing heart health and blood sugar levels.

Region:

Originally cultivated in the Middle East, black lentils are now grown in various parts of the world, including North America, Europe, and Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Heart Helper: Rich in magnesium and folate, black lentils have been known to improve heart health by reducing homocysteine levels and enhancing circulation.
- Blood Sugar Balancer: Their high fiber and complex carbohydrate content help regulate blood sugar levels, making them a great choice for diabetics and those seeking to maintain steady energy levels.
- Digestive Aid: The fiber in black lentils also promotes digestive health, aiding in bowel regularity and gut flora balance.

Modern research:

- Rice-legume diets with black beans significantly improve the overall amount of nutrients consumed in a regular diet.(783)
- Lentils, due to their high nutritive value and polyphenol-rich content, can help reduce the degenerative diseases like diabetes, obesity, cancers, and cardiovascular diseases.(784)
- Lentils contain a wide range of essential fatty acids, carotenoid, and tocopherol compounds, with carotenoids contributing the most to their strong antioxidant activity.(785)

Side Effects:

While generally safe, overconsumption of black lentils can lead to digestive discomfort due to their high fiber content. Individuals with legume allergies should avoid them.

Parts used:

The whole lentil, either whole or split.

Black lentils

Preparations:

- Black lentils can be cooked and added to salads, soups, and stews. They can also be sprouted for a crunchy texture. Rinse them thoroughly before cooking and soak for a few hours to reduce cooking time. No specific recipes are needed; they can be simply boiled in water or broth until tender.

Dosage:

Culinary: Incorporate 1/2 to 1 cup of cooked black lentils into your daily diet. They can be eaten alone, mixed into salads, or added to soups and stews.

No specific medicinal dosage is recommended, as black lentils are primarily consumed as a food. Regular inclusion in meals is sufficient for health benefits.

Piper nigrum

Black Pepper

A woody vine adorned with shiny, green heart-shaped leaves and clusters of tiny white flowers that produce green spherical fruits—the peppercorns.

Digestive and Respiratory Health, Pain Relief

Black pepper is the world's most traded spice and has constant presence in kitchens and dining tables across the globe. But it's not just about the fiery kick and intense aroma it imparts to our dishes. This tiny spice is a treasure trove of health benefits and has been a stalwart in traditional medicine for centuries.

Region:

Black pepper, fondly known as the 'King of Spices', originates from the humid, tropical rainforests of South India. Today, it's grown in numerous tropical regions worldwide, with Vietnam, India, and Indonesia being the leading producers.

Ancient Uses:

- Black Pepper, a staple in Ayurvedic medicine for centuries, boosts digestion by promoting hydrochloric acid production in the stomach, preventing food retention and easing heartburn and indigestion.
- Traditional Chinese Medicine has used black pepper to help with respiratory conditions. Its expectorant properties help break up mucus and phlegm deposits in the respiratory system, providing relief from sinusitis and nasal congestion.
- Black pepper was traditionally used as an analgesic for various conditions, including muscle pain and arthritis. Piperine, an active compound in Black Pepper, has anti-inflammatory properties that can help reduce pain and inflammation.
- In Ayurveda, black pepper is considered a powerful detoxifier. Its diaphoretic (promoting sweating) and diuretic (promoting urination) properties help the body rid itself of toxins.

Modern research:

- Black pepper extracts analyzed against mastitis pathogens showed significant antibacterial and antioxidant propeties, suggesting their potential use in treating mastitis.(408)
- Black pepper possesses potent analgesic and anti-inflammatory activities, with piperine at 10 mg/kg showing the most significant analgesic effect.(409)
- Based on the biological role of black pepper, a review suggests that peppercorn can be used as a raw medicine for digestive issues, diarrhea, fever,etc., while piperine, a secondary metabolite, can treat cardiovascular diseases, neurodegenerative disorders (like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's), and inflammatory conditions.(410)

Parts used:

Dried fruit, the black peppercorns

Preparations:

- Culinary Spice: Ground black pepper can be added to almost any dish, enhancing flavor while providing its unique health benefits.
- Black Pepper Oil: Extracted from the peppercorns, black pepper oil is used in aromatherapy and topical applications. Use as per the instructions provided by the manufacturer or an aromatherapy expert.
- Capsules: For a more concentrated dose, black pepper is available in capsule form as a supplement. Use as per the instructions of a healthcare provider.

Dried whole and crushed peppercorns

Synergies:

★★★★★

Black pepper and Cardamom

Black pepper and cardamom may enhance immune function and combat tumors, potentially aiding in inflammation control and cancer prevention. A combination of cardamom and black pepper powders can be mixed with honey.(411)

★★★★

Black pepper and Cumin

A decoction of black pepper and cumin extracts shows strong antioxidant properties, fighting free radicals and offering various other health benefits.(412)

Nigella sativa

Black Seeds

A delicate annual flowering plant adorned with pale blue and white flowers. These flowers produce fruit capsules containing tiny, black, and slightly curved seeds that pack a potent punch.

Digestive and Respiratory Health, Diabetes Management

Black seeds, known as the “seed of blessing” in the Middle East and prized for their medicinal properties by ancient cultures, have earned their place in natural wellness. Beyond adding flavor to your meals, these small seeds are packed with nutrients and health-enhancing compounds.

Region:

The history of black seeds, also known as black cumin, can be traced back to the Mediterranean and South-West Asian countries. Today, this plant is grown in many parts of the world, including North Africa, Middle East, and parts of Europe.

Ancient Uses:

- Black seeds were discovered in the tomb of Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun, indicating their high value in this ancient civilization. They were considered a panacea, providing a cure for all but death itself. The seeds were commonly consumed with honey or used in bread baking for their therapeutic value. They were especially reputed for their effects on the digestive and respiratory systems, and for enhancing skin health.
- In the Islamic tradition, Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that black seeds could cure every disease except death. They were widely used to boost immunity and treat various ailments, including headaches, toothaches, nasal congestion, and the common cold. The seeds were also consumed for their general health and well-being properties.
- In Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medicinal system, black seeds were known as ‘Upakunchika’ and used to balance the ‘doshas’ (life energies). These seeds were used to stimulate digestion, treat intestinal parasites, and manage disorders related to the stomach, kidneys, and liver. They were often incorporated into meals or used to create medicinal oils.

Modern research:

- Research confirms that the black seed extract has potential antioxidant and antimicrobial properties, suggesting its use not only as a dietary supplement but also in treating diseases caused by free radicals.(413)
- Black seeds significantly improve diabetes control by reducing blood glucose levels, glycated hemoglobin, insulin resistance, and increasing serum insulin. (414)
- Black seed essential oil has a potential therapeutic role in preventing acrylamide-induced liver toxicity.(415)

Parts used:

The small, black seeds

Preparations:

- Culinary Spice: They can be used whole or ground in cooking to add a distinctive flavor to dishes. Use according to taste in daily cooking.
- Black Seed Oil: Extracted from the seeds, 1 to 2 teaspoons oil can be used for topical applications or taken orally.
- Capsules: The seeds are also available in a more concentrated capsule form, which can be taken twice per day.

Black seeds in various forms

Synergies:

★★★★

Black seeds and Cinnamon

Combination of Nigella sativa and cinnamon extracts significantly improves blood glucose levels, lipid profile, and kidney function, with more prominent effects taking placewhen combined with metformin.(416)

★★★★

Black seed, Streptomycin, and Gentamicin

Black seed extract shows antibacterial synergism with streptomycin and gentamicin in animal trials.(417)

Vaccinium corymbosum

Blueberry

Blueberries are small, round berries, typically deep blue in color, with a sweet and slightly tangy flavor. They grow on shrubs and are part of the heath family, which includes cranberries and bilberries.

Boosts Brain Health and Heart Function

Revered by Native Americans for centuries as a gift from the Great Spirit, blueberries were used both as medicine and as a vital part of their diet. European settlers soon adopted these berries for their own uses. Today, blueberries are celebrated for their high antioxidant levels and potential brain-boosting properties.

Region:

Originally from North America, blueberries are now cultivated globally, particularly in the USA, Canada, and Europe. They thrive in acidic, well-drained soils in cooler climates.

Ancient Uses:

- Mind Sharpener: Native American tribes believed blueberries could boost concentration and alleviate symptoms of cognitive decline. They were often consumed by elders to maintain mental acuity.
- Heart Helper: Traditionally used to improve heart health, blueberries were consumed to reduce the risk of heart diseases and improve circulation.
- Immunity Booster: These berries were eaten to bolster immunity and prevent common ailments, especially during harsh winters.

Modern research:

- Blueberries can prevent age-related diseases, improve learning and memory in children, and help prevent neural impairment.(687)
- Blueberries are rich in proanthocyanidins, which enhances the prebiotic benefits of fiber and help regulate sugar spikes.(688)
- Blueberry supplementation improves memory in older adults, may reduce symptoms of depressions, and reduce glucose levels.(689)
- Regular consumption of blueberries is associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, death, and type 2 diabetes, improved weight maintenance, and neuroprotection.(690)

Parts used:

Fresh or dried berries, leaves

Fresh blueberries

Side Effects:

Blueberries are generally safe but may interact with blood-thinning medications. Excessive consumption can cause stomach discomfort and digestive issues.

Preparations:

- Blueberries can be enjoyed fresh, frozen, or dried. They can be added to cereals, yogurts, smoothies, or baked into desserts. The leaves can be used to brew herbal teas. Blueberry supplements are available in capsule or extract form.

Dosage:

- Oral: Consume a handful (about 1/2 cup) of fresh blueberries daily as part of a balanced diet for brain health and heart function. Blueberry extracts or supplements can be taken as directed on the packaging.
- Topical: While not commonly used topically, blueberry-infused skincare products can be applied as per the instructions for antioxidant benefits.

Synergies:

★★★★

Blueberry and Cereal

Combining breakfast cereals, oatmeal, or crispy rice flakes with blueberries in a meal can create a nutritionally beneficial combination. This combination is described as rich in fiber and polyphenols while being low in calories and fat.(691)

★★★★★

Blueberry and Soy milk

Fruit smoothies made with blueberries and soy milk (as opposed to water) exhibited significantly higher antioxidant capacity than smoothies made without blueberries and soy milk. (692)

Boswellia serrata

Boswellia

Boswellia is a small tree with narrow, oblong leaves and yellow or white flowers. It grows up to 15 meters (50 feet) tall and produces tiny, brown, or black seeds.

Anti-inflammatory and Joint Health Enhancer

Boswellia combats inflammation and joint pain with its anti-inflammatory effect. Beyond soothing aches, it's believed to serve as a protective shield, boasting antioxidant powers and fueling your immune system. With Boswellia in your corner, you're harnessing centuries-old wisdom to keep you feeling strong and energetic.

Region:

Boswellia is native to India and grows in other parts of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Ancient Uses:

- The Ebers papyrus from around 1500 BC first cited Boswellia resin's medicinal properties.
- The sap is where frankincense originates. By the 2nd century, Celsus advocated its use for wounds and hemlock poisoning, and when combined with leek juice, it was believed to address bruises and internal bleeding.
- Boswellia was used to help alleviate inflammation and pain from arthritis. It also supports respiratory health by easing symptoms of asthma and bronchitis.
- It's traditionally used in Africa for redness and sores. Kenyans use it for wounds.
- Paired with sesame oil, it's ingested to lessen schistosomiasis-induced blood loss.

Modern Research:

- Boswellia extract may potentially treat diabetes and decrease both kidney and liver complications caused by it.(36)
- Results of a 2018 study indicated that Boswellia was as potent as orlistat (an obesity medication) in combating obesity, hyperlipidemia, steatosis, and insulin resistance.(37)
- Boswellia species have the potential to act as neuroprotectants and treat or prevent neurodegenerative disorders.(38)

Side Effects:

Boswellia may cause diarrhea, headache, heartburn, itching, and nausea. Pregnant and nursing women should avoid it.

Parts used:

The resin of the tree

The resin tears can also be chewed on like gum

Preparations:

Boswellia comes in capsules or powder, and as a tincture for oral or topical use.

Dosage:

100–250 mg per day for 6 months.

Synergies:

★★★

Boswellia and Turmeric

Turmeric and Boswellia extracts can be used orally or topically for the treatment of inflammatory, pain-related, and degenerative disorders.(39)

★★★★

Boswellia and Bromelain

Taking a supplement containing boswellia and bromelain (a compound in pineapple) can help improve the quality of life for people suffering from osteoarthritis(40).

★★★★

Boswellia, Rosemary, Ginger, and Sumac,

The topical application of rosemary, ginger, sumac, and boswellia extracts can help reduce muscle and joint pain.(41)

★★★

Boswellia and Lemon balm

The combination of Boswellia and Lemon Balm may be beneficial for enhancing memory in older adults, particularly in relation to auditory immediate memory, immediate memory, visual immediate memory, and working memory.(42)

★★★

Boswellia and Myrrh

Boswellia and myrrh essential oils have synergistic effects in combating several pathogens.(43)

★★★★

Boswellia, Turmeric, and Licorice

Boswellia with turmeric and licorice has been effective in improving asthmatic patients' symptoms.(44)

Bertholletia excelsa

Brazil Nut

Brazil nut is one of the largest and longest-living trees in the Amazon rainforest. The nuts are encased in a large, hard shell and are known for their rich, creamy texture.

Supports Thyroid Function and Rich in Selenium

Esteemed by indigenous tribes of the Amazon for centuries, Brazil nuts have been a vital source of nutrition and health. These nuts are particularly renowned for their high selenium content, a mineral essential for thyroid health and powerful antioxidant properties.

Region:

Brazil nuts are native to the Amazon rainforests of Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru. Today, they are a significant export from these regions and are found worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Thyroid Regulator: Indigenous peoples recognized the importance of Brazil nuts for thyroid function due to their high selenium content.
- Antioxidant Source: Consumed for their antioxidant properties, helping in combating free radicals and supporting overall health.
- Energy Provider: Their high-calorie content made them an excellent energy source for hunters and gatherers in the dense rainforests.

Modern research:

- Regular Brazil nut consumption improves antioxidant status, lipid markers, fasting glucose, and various health markers in different populations, potentially preventing metabolic disorders. (678)
- Brazil nuts can improve lipid serum profile to lower cardiovascular risk factors, enhance the antioxidant system, and improve anti-inflammatory response.(679)
- Brazil nuts contain antioxidants, phenolics, flavonoids, tocopherol, phytosterols, and squalene, which may reduce the risk of atherosclerosis and cancer.(680)

Side Effects:

Brazil nuts are very high in selenium; excessive intake can lead to selenium toxicity. People should limit their intake to a few nuts daily. They also contain phytic acid, which may affect the absorption of other minerals.

Parts used:

The nut kernel

Barzil nut kernels

Preparations:

Brazil nuts can be eaten raw or blanched. They are often added to other dishes to provide a crunchy texture and nutty flavor. Brazil nut oil, extracted from the nuts, is used in cooking and cosmetics.

Dosage:

- Oral: Due to their high selenium content, it is recommended to eat no more than 1-3 Brazil nuts per day to avoid selenium toxicity. They can be enjoyed as a snack or chopped and added to salads, cereals, and baked goods.
- Topical: Brazil nut oil can be used as a moisturizing agent for the skin and hair, rich in vitamins and antioxidants.

Synergies:

★★★

Brazil nut and Other nuts

Brazil nuts should be included in the diet with other nuts, such as cashew nuts, hazel nuts, and macadamia nuts, as part of the recommended 30g of nuts per day. (681)

★★★★

Brazil and Cashew nuts

Brazil and cashew nuts combined can improve body composition, selenium levels, and blood vessel inflammation in women with risk of heart disease.(682)

Eat one Brazil nut a day for a selenium boost, beneficial for thyroid health and immunity.

Brassica oleracea var. Italica

Broccoli

Broccoli, with a large flowering head, stalk, and small leaves, is part of the cabbage family and is closely related to cauliflower. It can grow up to 90 cm (35 inches) tall, with their flower heads resembling miniature trees.

Boosts Immune System and Promotes Heart Health

Revered in ancient Rome for its nutritious value, broccoli is rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. The term 'broccoli' originates from the Italian plural of 'broccolo,' which means "the flowering crest of a cabbage," signifying its unique appearance.

Region:

Native to the Mediterranean region of Europe, broccoli has been embraced globally, especially in temperate climates. It thrives in cooler weather and is now widely cultivated in Europe, Asia, and America.

Ancient Uses:

- Immune Booster: Rich in vitamin C, broccoli has been used to strengthen the immune system and combat common illnesses.
- Heart Protector: Ancient practitioners recommended broccoli for heart health due to its high fiber and potassium content.
- Eye Health: Its rich beta-carotene content made it a choice food for maintaining good vision and eye health.
- Cancer Prevention: Broccoli's high levels of sulforaphane were known to have potential cancer-preventing properties, even in ancient times.

Modern Research:

- Broccoli consumption reduces the risk of cancer and inflammatory diseases.(786)
- Broccoli contains high levels of vitamins that can act as antioxidants and protect against degenerative diseases.(787)
- Broccoli sprouts are a rich source of enzyme inducers that protect against chemical carcinogens, thus offering possible protection against cancer.(788)
- Broccoli seedlings possess various antioxidant, anticancer, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, anti-obesity, and antidiabetic properties.(789)
- Broccoli leaves and stalks have high levels of dietary fiber and phenolic compounds.(790)

Side Effects:

Consuming large quantities of broccoli may cause gas or bowel irritation due to its high fiber content. Those with thyroid problems should consult a doctor before consuming large amounts, as it contains goitrogens, which can affect thyroid function.

Parts used:

Flowering head, stalk, and sprouts

Preparations:

Broccoli can be eaten raw, steamed, boiled, or stir-fried. It can be incorporated into soups, salads, casseroles, and smoothies. The stalks and sprouts are equally nutritious, offering a crisp texture and slightly peppery flavor.

Dosage:

- Dietary: Include 1-2 cups of cooked or raw broccoli in your daily diet to reap its full health benefits. Its high fiber content aids digestion, while its rich nutrient profile supports overall well-being.
- Juicing: Broccoli sprouts can be juiced and consumed for an intense nutrient boost, particularly beneficial for detoxification and promoting liver health.
- Supplemental: Broccoli supplements, available as capsules or powders, can be taken as directed on the product label, typically once or twice daily.

Fresh broccoli head

Synergies:

★★★★

Broccoli and Tomato

Broccoli, when combined with tomatoes, help in fighting cancer cells and improve immunity.(791)

Freeze and thaw broccoli sprouts to boost sulforaphane levels by up to 400x, a compound beneficial for cancer prevention and heart health.

Arctium lappa

Burdock

Burdock grows up to 3-4 feet tall and has purple flowers. Its heart-shaped leaves are green on top and white underneath with a wavy texture. The deep roots have a brownish-green or black exterior.

Blood Purifier and Skin Health Enhancer

Burdock, the Japanese globetrotter, offers both culinary delight and natural healing. Its root is a crunchy treat, while the leaves, roots, and seeds all have medicinal benefits, fighting bacteria and inflammation. In traditional Chinese medicine, Burdock is praised as a "blood purifier," addressing digestive issues, and slowing skin aging.

Region:

Burdock is native to Japan and Europe but now grows widely in the United States as a weed.

Ancient Uses:

- Burdock seeds, or "niupangzi," were used in ancient China for ailments like anorexia, arthritis, and fever; and the root purified blood. In Europe, burdock root treated cancer and syphilis.
- Hildegard of Bingen used burdock root for cancer, and English herbalists favored it for boils and scurvy.
- Native American tribes used it for various health issues and skin sores.
- The 1920s saw burdock root in alternative cancer therapies like Essiac and Hoxsey. In the 1940s, its sticking nature inspired Velcro's invention.
- It promotes urination, benefits heart health, and aids in maintaining cholesterol.
- For wounds, its leaves have been explored as non-stick bandages.

Modern research:

- Burdock root extract offers potential as a prebiotic medicine due to its rich phytochemicals and antioxidants, along with antimicrobial properties. (816)
- Drinking burdock root tea may benefit individuals with knee osteoarthritis by improving cholesterol levels and blood pressure. (817)
- Burdock root supports vascular health as a blood purifier, lymphatic system strengthener, and natural diuretic. (818)
- Its roots help promote gut health, provide antioxidants, reduce inflammation, and support heart and stomach health.(45)
- It's also rich in dietary fibers and polyphenols, making fermented burdock a potential aid for diabetes management and keeping pancreas healthy.(46)
- Studies suggest that burdock root helps manage body weight by influencing fat metabolism.(47)

Side Effects:

Burdock is generally safe when taken orally but may cause allergies in some. Beware when foraging, as it resembles certain highly toxic plants.

Parts used:

Fruit, leaves, roots

Preparations:

Burdock is available in capsule, oil, powder, tea, and tincture forms. It's often mixed with other blood-cleansing herbs. You can eat raw or stir-fried burdock root. Refrigerate processed parts and use them as soon as possible.

Dosage:

Reported dosages include 6 grams of burdock root tea daily; 12 grams of burdock fruit extract for advanced refractory pancreatic cancer; and 2-4 ml of burdock root tincture a day.

Fresh burdock roots

Synergies:

★★★★

Burdock and Nettle

Burdock and nettle extracts together may enhance blood sugar control, lower unhealthy fat levels, prevent harmful sugar-related reactions, and offer antioxidants, potentially benefiting those with diabetes and supporting overall health.(48)

★★★

Burdock, Licorice, Ginseng, Wild yam, and Motherwort

A formula containing burdock, licorice, female ginseng, wild yam, and motherwort (30 drops for 3 times daily) has been shown to reduce menopause symptoms.(49)

★★★

Burdock, Yellow dock, Dandelion, and Nettle

Burdock root, yellow dock, dandelion root, and nettle extracts can be combined for an enhanced blood-purifying effect.(50)

Ruscus aculeatus

Butcher's Broom

Butcher's broom is a small, evergreen shrub with dense, spiky leaves and small, greenish flowers. It grows to about 60 cm (2 feet) and produces small, red berries.

Enhances Circulatory Health and Venous Insufficiency Relief

Originating in Europe, butcher's broom has sturdy branches that once served as quaint brooms, perfect for sprucing up butcher blocks. Beyond cleaning, research suggests it has antibacterial compounds. So, while it swept away the grime, it was also waging war on bacteria.

Region:

Butcher's broom is native to Europe and Asia and is now found in many parts of the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Greek botanist Dioscorides endorsed Butcher's Broom for medicinal purposes, suggesting it for bladder stones, urine flow, menstrual regulation, headache relief, and jaundice treatment.
- 17th-century English herbalist Nicholas Culpepper used butcher's broom for bone fractures, advising patients to consume a decoction from the plant's root and apply its berries topically to the affected area.
- Circulation: Early investigations into butcher's broom indicated that its extracts could induce vasoconstriction and might help treat different circulatory ailments. It is believed to help improve blood flow in the veins and reduce inflammation.
- Kidney Stones: In ancient Greece, butcher's broom was believed to remove kidney stones when mixed with wine.
- Diuretic: Europeans have been using a butcher's broom. to increase urine production and flush out toxins from the body for nearly two thousand years. Many people soaked the rootstock in water or wine to help alleviate abdominal complaints.
- Laxative: Butcher's broom has been traditionally used as a natural laxative to help relieve constipation.

Modern Research:

- Researchers have confirmed Butcher's broom extract as an effective treatment for chronic venous disease, with evidence supporting its positive effects.(819)
- Topical application of the extract reduces femoral vein diameter therefore offering additional cardiovascular benefits.(51)

Side Effects:

The rhizome or root extract may be safe to take orally for 3 months but can cause diarrhea, heartburn, nausea, stomach discomfort, and vomiting. Topical use might cause allergies. Pregnant or breastfeeding individuals should avoid it.

Parts used:

Rhizomes and roots

Preparations:

Butcher's broom is commonly available in capsules, powders, or extract form and can be taken orally. You may also use tinctures or topical creams with Butcher's broom.

Dosage:

Adults can take 75-300 mg of Butcher's broom daily for 3 months.

Fresh roots and rhizome

Synergies:

★★★

Butcher's broom, Nettle, Fennel, and Parsley

A dried and powdered combination of butcher's broom, nettle, fennel roots, and parsley in equal proportions can address fluid retention and edema. Parsley can provide additional nutrients and antioxidants that support overall health.(53)

★★★

Butcher's broom and Buckwheat

The combination of butcher's broom extract with buckwheat herb seems to offer a potential therapeutic benefit for patients with non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy. It may help improve eye health and prevent the progression of retinal abnormalities.(54)

Clitoria ternatea

Butterfly Pea

A dazzling cascade of cobalt-blue blossoms, each one shaped like a poised butterfly, ready to take flight.

Cognitive Enhancement, Stress Relief, and Women's Health

This is where nature paints with a royal blue brush, where traditional remedies meet modern wellness, and where a simple cup of tea can magically change color before your eyes. Bursting with antioxidants and brimming with charm, this blue bloom has more than a few surprises up its petals!

Region:

Born in the tropical heartlands of Southeast Asia, the Blue Butterfly Pea has winged its way across the globe. From steamy rainforests to backyard gardens, this vibrant vine weaves its spell in warm climates worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- In ancient Ayurvedic practices, blue butterfly pea flower was used as a brain tonic to enhance memory and cognitive function, believed to improve intellect, calm the mind, and aid in stress management.
- In Thailand, the flower was traditionally consumed as a herbal tea to promote vitality, support healthy aging, stimulate blood circulation, and enhance hair health.
- In Indonesian traditional medicine, the plant was brewed into tea to address women's health issues, aiding with menstrual symptoms and post-childbirth recovery.(420)

Modern research:

- Butterfly pea flower exhibits antimicrobial activity against various bacteria, viruses, and fungi, showing great potential against infectious diseases. (418)
- A 2020 study found that butterfly pea flowers contain various health benefits, including antioxidant, antidiabetic, antiobesity, anticancer, anti-inflammatory, and antibiotic properties. (419)
- A 2021 Study found that butterfly pea ethanolic extract effectively prevents dental caries by inhibiting bacterial growth, thus benefiting oral health. (420)
- A 2016 study concluded that blue butterfly pea is a significant source of substances that have potential anti-cancer properties and strong anthelmintic activity. (421)
- A 2015 study concluded that the ethanol extract from the blue butterfly pea plant has antiulcer effects in the tested animal models.(422)
- A 2013 study found that the ethanolic root extract of blue butterfly pea has potential as a natural treatment for depression and mood disorders.(423)

Parts used:

Flowers

Preparations:

- Steep dried flowers in hot water for a color-changing blue-to-purple tea with a hint of lemon. Drink up to 2 cups daily.
- Grind dried flowers into a blue powder to enhance smoothies, lattes, or baked goods, using up to 2 teaspoons daily.
- Extract potent benefits from the flowers in a tincture, taking 1 to 2 ml once or twice daily.

Dry butterfly pea flowers

Synergies:

★★★

Butterfly peas and Lemon basil

Combining lemon, basil and butterfly peas in tea boosts antioxidant activity, which can help prevent and reduce oxidative stress. (424)

★★★

Butterfly pea and Ginger

Herbal tea made of butterfly pea dried flowers and 3% ginger powder shows synergistic antioxidant effects.(425)

★★★★

Butterfly pea and Pineapple

By soaking roasted butterfly pea seeds in pineapple juice, the bromelain contained in the pineapple can increase the antioxidant properties of the peas. (426)

Acorus calamus

Calamus

Calamus leaves are sword-shaped, and its stems are reed-like. Its rhizomes are cigar-shaped and long-branched. It also has yellow-green flowers on a fleshy spike called a spadix.

Aids in Digestive Health and Vocal Enhancement

The name 'Acorus' stems from the Greek 'ἀχόρου' as per Dioscorides, linked to 'κόρη', meaning 'pupil', hinting at its role in eye disease remedies. The specific epithet 'calamus' is Greek for "reed", aligning with its tall, reedy silhouette. Calamus is also called 'Muskrat Root' and 'Sweet Flag', or sway.

Region:

Calamus grows in central Asia, Europe, India, North America, southern Russia, and Siberia.

Ancient Uses:

- Calamus, known for its strong, sweet scent, mainly in its rhizomes, was a key ingredient in Egyptian perfumes, albeit at higher costs due to imports from India and Syria.
- The Greeks used it for eye diseases, Europeans for digestive issues, and Ayurvedic medicine valued it highly. Dried rhizomes were used in bitters, liqueurs, sweets, and vermouths.
- North American Indians used it for stamina on long journeys, just as South American Indians used coca leaves.
- British calamus differs from American calamus (A. calamus var. americanus), which is banned by the FDA in the US.
- Calamus, or "Singer's Root," was often used to treat post-traumatic stress disorder and can be used alongside other treatments for anorexia, autism, and epilepsy.

Modern research:

- Calamus can be used for diabetes treatment as it has anti-diabetic and antioxidant properties. (820)
- A study found that calamus root extract can be beneficial for gout. (821)
- In a 2010 study, ethanolic extracts from calamus leaves were found to enhance wound healing. Applied topically to animal wounds, these extracts accelerated wound closure, skin formation, tissue strength, and overall skin quality.(55)
- Calamus extracts and essential oils may slow down the growth of cancer cells and inhibit the formation of new blood vessels that tumors need to grow.(56)

Side Effects:

Common side effects include vomiting, a fast heart rate, and slowed intestinal movements. Long-term, high-dose application in an animal model demonstrated carcinogenic effects.

Parts used:

The root (rhizome)

Preparations:

Infuse fresh or dried calamus in cold water overnight or add hot water to powdered calamus. For a strained voice or laryngitis, chew a 1 cm piece of the root and hold it in between your cheek and gums throughout the day.

Dosage:

Take 4g of dried root (about 3/4 tsp), 30 ml of a decoction, and 4 ml of 1:5 tincture up to thrice daily.

Fresh and dry calamus roots

Synergies:

★★★

Calamus and Chaste tree

An infusion of Calamus rhizome combined with the root part of the Chinese chaste tree shows activity against intestinal worms when consumed orally.(57)

★★★

Calamus, Yarrow, and Peppermint

To improve appetite and stimulate the release of digestive juices in the stomach, a tea composed of finely cut sweet flag rhizome, yarrow, and peppermint, is boiled for 15 minutes and consumed lukewarm.(58)

★★★

Calamus, Watercress, Goldenseal, and Motherwort

A combination of dried calamus, watercress, goldenseal, and motherwort can be steeped in water for 30 minutes and taken before meal (1 tablespoon) for reducing stomach acid or acidosis.(59)

Calendula officinalis

Calendula

Calendula is an annual herb with bright, orange-yellow flowers and hairy, green leaves. It grows up to 60 cm (2 feet) tall.

Soothes Skin and Aids Digestion

Calendula's powerful anti-inflammatory attributes can heal wounds and soothe skin. It can also flex its muscles as an antifungal and antimicrobial agent. Its unique name is derived from Latin, meaning "little calendar" or "little clock". It's also fondly called "marigold", as a beautiful nod to the Virgin Mary.

Region:

Calendula is native to the Mediterranean region and is now found in many parts of the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Calendula was occasionally used for headaches, red eyes, fever, and toothaches. 17th century herbalist Nicholas Culpeper suggested its potential benefits for the heart, though it wasn't highly regarded as a medicine.
- Calendula found its place in magical rituals, such as potions to reveal fairies or ointments made from powdered calendula, marjoram, thyme, and wormwood simmered in honey and white wine. Unmarried women with numerous suitors used this ointment to reveal their ideal match.
- Calendula was applied topically for skin issues, wounds, scars, and cuts, soothing irritation and reducing inflammation.
- It's also used as a natural remedy for eye irritation and infection by infusing petals in oil or water and used as eye drops.
- Calendula was also used to relieve cramping and constipation by stimulating digestive tract muscles.

Modern Research:

- Research shows that Calendula flowers can be effective at relieving stomach cramps and constipation. (823)
- Due to its bioactive compounds, Calendula has been shown to have anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties. (824)
- Studies suggest that Calendula essential oil cream can be used topically to protect the skin from UV radiations and to maintain the natural pigmentation of the skin tissue.(60)
- Calendula extract cream is shown to be a safe and effective alternative for treating white discharge, vaginal itching, and foul odors caused by vaginal bacteria in women.(61)
- Calendula's antitumor potential, seen in cytotoxic activity against cancer cells and bioactive compounds, merits further research in cancer treatment. (62)
- A preparation of equal parts of arnica, calendula, St. John's wort, and comfrey extracts (diluted 1:100) has been shown to result in faster wound healing (a homeopathic medicine named Similasan® Arnica plus Spray). (63)

Side Effects:

Calendula can cause drowsiness, reduced breathing if ingested, and skin irritation if used topically. Those with allergies to the Asteraceae/Compositae family should avoid it. It can also affect hormone levels and even induce menstruation in nursing or pregnant women.

Parts used:

Flowers and leaves

Dried calendula flowers

Preparations:

Dried petals can be used to make oils or tea. When brewing calendula tea, you can garnish it with some fresh flowers. Calendula can be infused with coconut oil for topical application.

Dosage:

Dosage will vary depending on its form and the intended use.

Synergies:

★★★★

Calendula and Aloe vera

Combining Aloe vera and Calendula into an ointment appears to speed up the healing of episiotomy wounds in new moms, a common procedure during childbirth. It also heals diaper rashes in infants.(64)

Carum carvi

Caraway

Caraway is a biennial herb with feathery leaves, small white or pink flowers, and grows up to 60 cm (24 inches) tall. Its small brown pods, often mistaken for seeds, are actually the dried fruits of the caraway plant.

Relieves Digestive Issues and Enhances Respiratory Health

Caraway boasts a centuries-old history in both kitchens and traditional medicine. Its distinctive sweet and warm flavor is prized in baking, liqueur making, and perfumery. It was esteemed for its taste and healing attributes: aiding digestion, offering respiratory relief, and serving as a diuretic and expectorant.

Region:

Caraway is native to western Asia, Europe, and Northern Africa. It is now grown in many parts of the world, including North America and Australia.

Ancient Uses:

- The roots of caraway plants were used with milk to make a type of bread called "chara," that had been favored by Julius Caesar himself.
- The ancient Romans spread the seeds across Europe, and is cultivated, from Sicily to Scandinavia, since the Middle Ages.
- Caraway was used in love potions. Caraway seeds were also mixed with chicken feed to discourage wandering. Today, some people still give them to homing pigeons.
- The 12th-century German texts have described its effectiveness as a stomach tonic and a treatment for flatulence and other stomach ailments, like bloating, gas, and indigestion.
- During the time of Nero, Dioscorides, an ancient Greek doctor, herbalist, and scientist, recommended using caraway oil on "pale-faced girls." However, it is unknown if he was referring to any ailment in particular.
- Caraway has been used as a natural diuretic to help increase urine production and reduce bloating.
- It has traditionally been used to remove mucus from the respiratory tract and soothe coughs and colds.

Modern Research:

- A 2017 study of Caraway seeds suggested that caraway extract could be used as a natural analgesic for ulcers, inflammation, and pain. (825)
- Caraway seed oil may be beneficial for people with diabetes by reducing stress on the body, controlling blood sugar, and improving blood fat levels without affecting the essential protein levels.(67)
- Caraway when consumed with aerobic exercise has positive effects on the level of C-reactive protein and sleep quality.(68)

Side Effects:

Caraway oil is generally safe, but can cause burping, heartburn, and nausea when used with peppermint oil. Topical use is safe for up to 3 weeks. While there are pregnancy concerns, nursing mothers use it to enhance milk production.

Parts used:

Seeds and oil

Preparations:

Caraway seeds and oil are commonly used in cooking and flavoring beverages. Supplements are available as capsules or tinctures.

Dosage:

Taking 1/2 to 1 tsp (1–6.7 grams) of whole caraway divided into 3 daily doses is safe and effective. Caraway oil is more effective topically than when consumed in the diet.

A pile of dry caraway fruit

Synergies:

★★★★

Caraway and Peppermint

Caraway oil in combination with peppermint oil or menthol is used for treatment of functional dyspepsia in clinical studies. Caraway oil applied topically on the abdomen relieves the symptoms of inflammatory bowel disease patients.(69)

★★★★

Caraway, Clove, Cumin, Basil, and Marjoram

A combination of caraway, clove, cumin, basil, and marjoram essential oils have a synergistic effect against fungal infections, when applied topically over the affected area.(70)

Elettaria cardamomum

Cardamom

It's a large, leafy plant with tall, straight stalks that proudly carry small, white flowers with blue tips. The flowers produce tiny seed pods that house the aromatic black seeds.

Digestive Health and Neuroprotective Properties

Known as the 'Queen of Spices,' cardamom captivates both chefs and healers with its sweet, slightly pungent taste and eucalyptus-like scent. Beyond its sensory appeal, cardamom offers a treasure trove of health benefits, making it a prized medicinal herb.

Region:

The misty, mountainous regions of southern India and Sri Lanka are the original home of cardamom. This spice has since been used across continents and is now also cultivated in Guatemala, which is the world's largest producer, and other tropical areas like Costa Rica and Tanzania.

Ancient Uses:

- In Ayurveda medicine, cardamom enhanced digestion, relieved stomach pain, eased heartburn and IBS symptoms, and balanced the three "doshas" (life forces) for better health.
- In Chinese Medicine, cardamom freshened breath and maintained oral health, countering breath odor effects in medicinal recipes.
- The Egyptians used cardamom in the mummification process for its strong, pleasant aroma. They also valued it for cosmetic purposes, using it in perfumes and even chewing the pods to clean their teeth.

Modern research:

- A 2019 study indicated that cardamom oil could provide neuroprotection against neurotoxicity caused by aluminum chloride to reduce oxidative damage.(427)
- Cardamom fruit and seed extracts show antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties, potentially offering therapeutic benefits against periodontal infections, resulting in better oral health.(428)
- Cardamom oil has potential heart health benefits, and can restore lipid homeostasis in hypercholesterolemia. Cardamom essential oil and geraniol effectively reduce kidney and brain oxidative stress while increasing antioxidant markers.(429)

Parts used:

Seeds

Cardamom seeds

Preparations:

- Tea: The seeds or whole pods can be brewed into a warming, aromatic tea, using up to 2 pods, up to twice per day.
- Essential Oil: Cardamom essential oil is used in aromatherapy and topical applications.These should be used as per the manufacturer's instructions or a healthcare provider's advice.
- Capsules: For a more concentrated dose, cardamom is also available in capsule form. These should be used as per the manufacturer's instructions or a healthcare provider's advice.

Synergies:

★★★★

Cardamom, Saffron, Ginger, and Cinnamon

Cardamom, saffron, ginger, and cinnamon enriched with multi-strain probiotics show a synergistic relationship for managing type 2 diabetes.(431)

★★★★★

Cardamom and Black pepper

Mix cardamom and black pepper powders with honey for greater immune support and disease resistance.(432)

★★★★★

Cardamom, Ginger, and Cinnamon

The blend of 10% ginger, 68% cinnamon, and 22% cardamom essential oils offers antioxidant and antibacterial benfits, suitable for diffusers, inhalers, or diluted skin application.(433)

Rhamnus purshiana

Cascara sagrada

Cascara Sagrada is a small tree or large shrub with dark green leaves and small, yellow flowers. It grows up to 10 meters (33 feet) tall and produces small, black berries.

Natural Laxative for Constipation Relief

Cascara sagrada is a cherished gem from Mother Nature's pharmacy. This magical tree bark is more than just a potent laxative; it's a time-honored remedy to reboot your digestive system. Get ready to bid adieu to constipation with its gentle yet effective, stimulating properties. It's a tad bitter with a lingering aftertaste, but it is definitely worth a slight sensory adventure for the relief it promises.

Region:

Cascara sagrada is native to the Western United States and Canada. It is now grown in many parts of the world, including North and Central America.

Ancient Uses:

- Cascara sagrada, known as "sacred bark," was used by Native Americans. It comes from a tree in the northwestern United States and acts as a natural laxative due to anthraquinone glycosides in the bark, which promote bowel movements.
- Cascara sagrada is a traditional natural laxative that relieves constipation by stimulating bowel movements. It was a primary ingredient in over-the-counter laxatives until 2002.
- Cascara sagrada has been used in traditional medicine to treat gallbladder and liver disorders.
- It has also been used as a diuretic to help increase urine flow and promote the excretion of toxins from the body.
- In traditional medicine, it has been used as an astringent to stop bleeding and a remedy for parasitic infections.

Modern Research:

- Not much scientific research has been done on Cascara Sagrada's medicinal benefits. It is well known to be an effective laxative but the US FDA has banned its approval in 2002 due to lack of evidence.(73)

Side Effects:

Cascara sagrada is safe in short-term, low doses, as directed. Exceeding the dose or long-term use can lead to liver toxicity. It's safe only after it has been aged for a year. In 2002, the U.S. FDA banned cascara as a laxative.

Parts used:

Bark

Preparations:

Cascara sagrada bark is typically dried and ground into a powder, which can be taken as a capsule or tincture. It is also sometimes added to tea or other liquid preparations.

Dosage:

Cascara helps with constipation. The recommended dose is 300 mg once a day. Don't take more than the recommended dose or use it for more than six days. You can find cascara in tablets, capsules, or syrup, as directed. You can also make tea or add 1 ml of extract to lukewarm water.

Cascara sagrada has been used traditionally as a laxitive. But modern research suggests that the herb may do more harm than good.

Synergies:

★★★★

Cascara sagrada and Yellow dock

Preparation containing cascara and yellow dock produces a laxative effect to help eliminate worm infestations from the bowels.(76)

★★★★★

Cascara sagrada and Ginger

Brew cascara and ginger according to a 7:3 ratio using the decoction brewing method, which results in a much better tasting tea, particularly by altering the phenolic content, caffeine content, pH, and color attributes.(77)

Uncaria tomentosa

Cat's claw

Cat's claw is a woody vine with long, curved thorns that resemble a cat's claws, hence its name. It has large, oblong leaves and small, yellow flowers. The vine can grow up to 30 meters (98 feet) long.

Boosts Immunity and Reduces Inflammation

Dubbed "uña de gato" by the locals, cat's claw is a beacon of health and vitality. Each steaming cup of Cat's Claw tea or handy supplement shows anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting effects. Struggling with digestive troubles? Don't fret. This 'cat' has your back.

Region:

Cat's claw is native to the Amazon rainforest in South America. It is now grown in many parts of the world, including Central and South America, Asia, and the United States.

Ancient Uses:

- Cat's claw, with roots dating back to the Inca civilization, served as both an herbal remedy and a rejuvenating beverage. Used for millennia to enhance health and spiritual well-being, it gained recognition through South American travelers and priests, spreading to Europe and North America.
- In Peru, the Asháninka Indians highly regard Uncaria tomentosa (savéntaro) for its anxiety-relieving properties. Expert healers prepared a bitter medicinal drink from its root bark to alleviate anxiety and promote well-being.
- Uncaria guianensis, another Cat's claw species, was used in wound healing and treating dysentery, similar to Uncaria tomentosa.
- Cat's claw also boasts anti-inflammatory properties, aiding in pain management for osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. It's believed to stimulate the immune system, addressing allergies, cancer, and infections.

Modern Research:

- Cat's claw shows promise as an anti-fungal for use in dentistry. (71)
- Cat's claw extract, which contains oxindole alkaloids, can be taken as a supplement to reduce the side effects of chemotherapy for cancer treatment.(72)
- Cat's claw can be helpful in arthritis, where the inflammation and tissue damage affects the balance of energy-giving molecules in cells.(75)

Side Effects:

Certain people may experience headaches, dizziness, and vomiting. It may also exacerbate certain autoimmune diseases.

Parts used:

Root and bark

Preparations:

Cat's Claw can be consumed as tea or in capsule/tincture form. Traditionally, the root or stem bark is boiled to create a decoction.

Dosage:

Tinctures are administered at a dose of 1 mL 1 to 3 times daily, and dry extracts at a dose of 500-2,000 mg mixed in water 1 to 3 times per day.

Powdered root is also commonly used.

Synergies:

★★★★

Cat's claw and other botanical species

Combining Cat's Claw with other extracts such as black garlic, devil's claw, camu-camu, blackcurrant, and citrus fruits improves its effectiveness in addressing inflammation associated with chronic diseases like arthritis, cardiovascular disease, cancer, blood pressure, diabetes, etc. (826)

★★★★

Cat's claw and medicinal mushroom

The combination of cat's claw water extract, medicinal mushroom extracts (Cordyceps, almond mushroom, maitake, turkeytail, and reishi mushroom), nicotinamide, and zinc offers health benefits, including reduced pain, fatigue, weight loss, and decreased DNA damage in peripheral blood.(827)

Brassica oleracea var. botrytis

Cauliflower

Cauliflower is a cruciferous vegetable, characterized by its white, compact head (curd), surrounded by green leaves. It grows from a thick central stem to form a single round head, typically 6-12 inches in diameter.

Promotes Heart Health and Supports Brain Function

Once a prized possession of the ancient Assyrians, cauliflower has traversed through the rich soils of Asia, Europe, and now America. Its name, derived from the Latin words 'caulis' (cabbage) and 'floris' (flower), points to its unique place in the cabbage family. Celebrated for its versatility in cooking, its real magic lies in its dense nutritional profile, especially its benefits for the heart and brain.

Region:

Originally native to the northeastern Mediterranean, cauliflower has adapted to various climates and is now cultivated globally, thriving in cool temperatures.

Ancient Uses:

- Brain Booster: Ancient scholars appreciated cauliflower for its high choline content, essential for brain health and cognitive functioning.
- Heart Helper: Praised in ancient texts for its sulforaphane and fiber, key in maintaining heart health by reducing blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Digestive Aid: Its high fiber content was noted in ancient Greek and Roman writings, aiding in digestion and promoting gut health.

Modern Research:

- Cauliflower is a rich source of health-promoting bioactive compounds, including glucosinolates, phenolics, and flavonoids, with the highest antioxidant capacity found in leaves.(792)
- Steamed cauliflower has the highest antioxidant activity, while boiled cauliflower has the lowest antioxidant activity.(793)
- Cauliflower is a good source of fiber, vitamins, and minerals, is safe for consumption, and does not present health risks.(794)
- Cauliflower is an excellent source of phenolics, ascorbic acid, vitamins B1, B2, and B3, folic acid, tocopherols, and dietary fiber. It may also lower the risk of cancer due to its glucosinolate content.(795)

Side Effects:

Cauliflower consumption is generally safe, but in excess, it may cause gas or bloating due to its high fiber content. Individuals with thyroid issues should consult a doctor before consuming large amounts as it contains goitrogens, which may affect thyroid function.

Parts used:

The white head (curd) and sometimes the green leaves

Cauliflower head

Preparations:

Cauliflower can be enjoyed cooked or raw. It's a popular substitute for grains and legumes in various dishes. You can steam, boil, roast, or sauté it. It's also used to make soups, purees, and even cauliflower rice. Ready-to-eat cauliflower products are available in supermarkets.

Dosage:

There is no specific dosage for cauliflower, but incorporating it into meals on a regular basis is recommended.

Synergies:

★★★★★

Cauliflower and Other vegetables

Combining cauliflower with other vegetables or legumes that are high in antioxidants can result in enhanced antioxidant benefits.(796)

Capsicum annuum

Cayenne pepper

Enhances Circulation and Aids Digestion

Cayenne pepper is a small, red pepper that belongs to the same family as bell peppers and sweet peppers. It is typically dried and ground into a powder or used fresh in cooking.

Cayenne pepper has been used for centuries in traditional medicine and cooking. It is known for its spicy, hot flavor and ranks around 30,000 - 50,000 Scoville units, putting it somewhere in the middle of spicy peppers. It has several health benefits, including reducing inflammation, improving circulation, and aiding digestion.

Region:

Cayenne pepper is native to Central and South America. It is now grown in many parts of the world, including the United States, Africa, and Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Native Americans used cayenne for 9,000 years, both as a food and a medicine. Cayenne pepper's hot and spicy flavor is mainly attributed to capsaicin, a pain-relieving substance. They used it to treat various disorders of the circulatory and digestive systems.
- Cayenne has also been used in traditional Ayurvedic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean medicines as an oral remedy for circulatory problems and poor appetite.
- Cayenne is believed to improve blood circulation to the heart and has been used to treat conditions such as heart disease and stroke.
- It has been used to improve digestion and reduce bloating. It stimulates the digestive tract and increases the flow of digestive enzymes and juices.
- Its anti-inflammatory properties treat the inflammation and related symptoms, such as pain, redness, and swelling of the affected area.
- Cayenne has been used topically to ease discomfort and relieve pain. It can help relieve headaches by acting as an analgesic.

Modern Research:

- A 2014 study found that cayenne pepper can aid in lowering the chances of cardiovascular disease.(78)
- Cayenne pepper may be beneficial for human consumption due to its potentially high antioxidant and antiproliferative properties, which may help in the fight against cancer.(79)
- Dietary consumption of cayenne pepper helps reduce the factors associated with metabolic dysregulation, and helps to regulate metabolic system.(80)
- A 2018 study suggests that capsaicin and capsinoids (active compounds in cayenne pepper) could potentially be included in the diet to help people with obesity lose weight and burn more fat by increasing their energy expenditure and improving how their bodies use fat for energy.(81)

Side Effects:

Capsaicin supplements might upset the stomach, less so with food. They can increase body temperature and blood pressure; consult a doctor if on blood pressure medication.

Parts used:

Dried pepper

Crushed and dried peppers

Preparations:

To relieve pain, mix 1-2 tbsp of ground cayenne pepper with 1/2 cup oil. Heat the mixture for 5-10 minutes, then allow to cool before applying to affected areas.

Dosage:

Studies suggest a dose of 2 to 6 mg daily. Start with a low dose to minimize any potential side effects.

Synergies:

★★★★

Cayenne pepper and Turmeric

Cayenne pepper powder has been added along with turmeric while cooking since ages. Several scientific studies have supported the use of turmeric as an anti-obesity agent. Cayenne pepper also has shown to reduce obesity-related inflammation. Thus, adding a combination of cayenne and turmeric to your stews, sauces, and curries, can help you maintain your body weight.(82)

Apium graveolens

Celery seed

Celery seed is the small, brown seed of the celery plant. It is typically dried and used as a spice in cooking.

Calms Blood Pressure, Aids Digestion, Reduces Inflammation

Beyond its subtly bitter flavor spicing up your favorite dishes, celery seed offers a wealth of health benefits. This tiny seed is a trifecta of goodness tackling inflammation, aiding digestion, and lowering blood pressure.

Region:

Celery seed is native to the Mediterranean region. It is now grown in many parts of the world, including Europe, Asia, and North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Historical texts on herbal medicine from the medieval period recommended celery to alleviate hysteria, calm the nerves, and induce peaceful slumber.
- The ancient Greeks and Romans used celery as a seasoning, while the ancient Chinese used it as a medicine.
- Celery seed is believed to help lower blood pressure and has been traditionally used to treat hypertension.
- Celery seed has been used to help improve digestion and reduce bloating.
- Celery seed has been used to reduce inflammation in the body, particularly in the digestive system and joints.
- Celery seed has been traditionally used to support urinary tract health and to help relieve symptoms of urinary tract disorders.

Modern Research:

- Celery seed essential oil is composed of chemical compounds that possess antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and neurotransmitter-regulating properties, which may relieve symptoms of depression.(84)
- Celery seed may be a viable option for women with sexual dysfunction, as it has been shown to improve sexual function in women and is considered safe, well-tolerated, and effective.(85)
- A 2012 study found that celery seed extracts contain compounds with antioxidant properties, thus protecting the body against free radical damage.(86)
- A recent scientific report found that celery seed components show potential for treating various chronic diseases and high blood sugar levels.(87)

Side Effects:

Avoid celery seeds during pregnancy due to the risk of uterine bleeding and contractions. People with kidney inflammation, low blood pressure, or those using certain medications should also steer clear. Be cautious of skin sensitivity to UV rays from celery seeds and seek professional advice when combining them with specific drugs. Don't use gardening packet celery seeds, as they may contain chemicals.

Parts used:

Dried seed

Preparations:

A pile of celery seeds

Celery seed is typically used as a spice in cooking or can be taken as a supplement in capsule or tincture form. It can be ground up into a powder or eaten whole.

Dosage:

Due to a lack of scientific evidence, celery seeds should not be given to children under 18.

How much celery seed to consume depends on the intended purpose and form, including celery seed oil, capsules or tablets, extract, or whole seeds. Consult a physician to determine the correct dosage.

Synergies:

★★★★

Celery, Buchu, and Basil

A herbal composition of celery seed oil, buchu leaf oil, and basil oil,have shown synergistic effect in treating diarrhea, diarrhea related disorders and electrolyte and fluid imbalance. (88)

Matricaria chamomilla

Chamomile

Chamomile is an annual herb with small, white daisy-like flowers and feathery leaves. It grows up to 60 cm (24 inches) tall and produces small, yellow-brown seeds.

Soothes Anxiety, Promotes Sleep, Aids Digestion

Chamomile has been used for centuries in traditional medicine and is known for its calming properties. It is often consumed as tea to help relax the mind and body, promote sleep, and reduce stress and anxiety. In addition to its medicinal properties, chamomile has also been used as a natural dye and in skin care products.

Region:

Chamomile is native to Europe, Asia, and the Mediterranean region but is now grown in many parts of the world, including North America.

Ancient Uses:

- The 10th-century Anglo-Saxon manuscript, Lacnunga, listed it as one of nine sacred herbs.
- Used by Greeks and Egyptians for skin conditions and fever, Hippocrates also wrote about its benefits.
- Romans used chamomile for headaches. The Roman variety was cultivated in the 16th century by a British botanist and recognized in the Würtenberg pharmacopeia as a gas reliever and painkiller.
- Chamomile calms the nervous system, aiding anxiety and stress relief. It's been used to enhance digestion, relieve bloating, and as a remedy for insomnia.

Modern Research:

- Chamomile extract may have potential benefits in preventing or alleviating obesity, hyperglycemia, and hyperlipidemia, making it a possible functional beverage for promoting better health.(89)
- Chamomile appears effective and safe for improving sleep quality and treating various anxiety disorders.(90)
- Chamomile has powerful antibacterial properties that can combat various disease-causing microorganisms.(91)
- The use of chamomile was found to help manage and reduce various risk factors associated with cardiovascular diseases.(92)

Side Effects:

Chamomile may cause dizziness, nausea, allergies, and drowsiness. Avoid before surgery, if you have asthma, or during pregnancy. Overconsumption of its tea may cause vomiting.

Parts used:

Dried chamomile flowers and tea

Flowers

Preparations:

- Tea: Steep a chamomile tea bag or flowers in hot water for 5 to 10 minutes in a covered mug, up to four times per day.

Dosage:

- Capsules: 900 to 1200 milligrams daily.

Synergies

★★★

Chamomile and Lavender

Aromatherapy with lavender and chamomile essential oils is a safe method for reducing the daily use of analgesics, resulting in fewer side effects and better pain control. It can be used in combination with routine analgesics.(93)

★★★

Chamomile and Saffron

Herbal tea made by combining 20 mg chamomile and 1 mg of saffron shows long-term benefits for those with depression and enhances the efficacy of several other medical treatments.(94)

★★★

Chamomile, Myrrh, and Coffee

The herbal combination of myrrh, chamomile flowers, and coffee charcoal has shown potential for the treatment of ulcerative colitis. (95)

★★★★

Chamomile and Lemon balm

Lemon balm and chamomile syrup improves chest pain, discomfort, quality of life, and alleviates anxiety and depression in patients with drug-resistant cardiac Syndrome X.(96)

For insomnia or anxiety, drinking chamomile tea 30-45 minutes before bedtime can help due to its natural relaxing properties.

Prunus avium

Cherry

The cherry is a small, round fruit ranging in color from deep red to yellow, known for its tart or sweet taste. Cherries grow on flowering trees and belong to the genus Prunus, closely related to plums and apricots.

Alleviates Joint Pain and Promotes Sleep

Cherished since ancient times, cherries were rumored to be a favorite of Chinese emperors. Greek philosophers like Theophrastus and Pliny the Elder documented their health benefits. In mythology, cherries are associated with Venus, the goddess of love, symbolizing beauty and immortality.

Region:

Native to Europe, Western Asia, and parts of Northern Africa, cherries are now widely cultivated in temperate regions worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Pain Reliever: Cherries, particularly tart ones, have been used for their anti-inflammatory properties, helping to alleviate joint pain and symptoms of arthritis.
- Sleep Enhancer: Their natural melatonin content aids in regulating sleep cycles.
- Digestive Aid: Ancient practitioners recommended cherries for digestive health and to ease constipation.
- Cough Suppressant: Cherry bark has been used in traditional cough remedies.

Modern Research:

- Consumption of sweet or tart cherries can promote health by preventing or decreasing oxidative stress and inflammation, improving sleep, and decreasing blood pressure. (700)
- Sweet and sour cherries contain antioxidants and polyphenols with antioxidant, anticancer, and anti-inflammation properties, which may help prevent diseases like heart disease, cancers, and diabetes.(701)
- Cherry intake has potential preventive health benefits in relation to cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, inflammatory diseases, and Alzheimer's disease due to their high antioxidant activity and low glycemic response.(702)

Side Effects:

While generally safe, cherries can cause allergic reactions in some people. Due to their high fiber content, excessive consumption may lead to digestive discomfort.

Parts used:

Fruit, bark, and leaves

Fresh cherries

Preparations:

- Cherries can be eaten fresh, dried, or cooked. Cherry juice and concentrates are popular for health benefits. Tea made from cherry bark and leaves can be used for coughs and respiratory issues.

Dosage:

- Dietary: Enjoy a serving (about 1 cup) of fresh cherries daily for joint health and improved sleep.
- Juice: Drink 8-16 ounces of tart cherry juice daily for pain relief and sleep benefits.
- Tea: Steep 1-2 teaspoons of dried cherry bark or leaves in hot water for 10 minutes. Drink 1-2 times daily for respiratory benefits.
- Topical: Apply cherry-infused balms or creams for skin health and relief from muscular pain.

Salvia hispanica

Chia Seeds

Chia seeds are tiny, oval seeds that come from the desert plant Salvia hispanica, a member of the mint family. Originating in Central America, these seeds are known for their remarkable ability to absorb water and form a gel-like substance.

Enhances Energy and Supports Digestive Health

Historically revered by the Aztecs and Mayans, chia seeds were a staple in their diets, valued for their ability to provide sustainable energy. "Chia" is the ancient Mayan word for "strength." These seeds were also used in religious rituals and as offerings to the gods.

Region:

Native to central and southern Mexico and Guatemala, chia seeds have now gained popularity worldwide as a superfood.

Ancient Uses:

- Energy Booster: Ancient warriors attributed their stamina and endurance to chia seeds, often consuming them before battles or long journeys.
- Digestive Aid: The high fiber content in chia seeds was used to promote bowel regularity and healthy digestion.
- Hydration Helper: The ability of chia seeds to absorb water was utilized for hydration purposes, especially during long periods of physical activity or in hot climates.

Modern Research:

- Chia seeds and their oil have various health benefits, such as decreasing blood glucose, waist circumference, and decreasing weight in overweight adults. Chia seeds also show improvements in pruritic skin and endurance in distance runners.(671)
- Long-term intake of chia seeds is associated with increased bone mineral content and improved nutrient absorption in animal models.(672)
- Chia seeds are a nutritious, superfood with potential health benefits, including supporting the digestive system, promoting healthy skin, and reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and signs of aging.(673)

Side Effects:

Chia seeds are generally safe, but due to their high fiber content, overconsumption may lead to gastrointestinal discomfort. It's important to consume them with ample water.

Parts used:

The whole seed

Preparations:

Chia seeds

- Chia seeds can be eaten raw, soaked in juice, added to porridges and puddings, or incorporated into baked goods. Soaking chia seeds in water or plant-based milk overnight creates a gelatinous mixture that can be used as a base for chia puddings, a popular healthful dessert.

Dosage:

- Oral: A common dosage is 1-2 tablespoons of chia seeds, twice daily. Mix them into yogurt, smoothies, salads, or cereals for a nutrient boost.
- Topical: Not typically used topically due to their small size and high absorption properties when in contact with liquids.

Synergies

★★★★

Chia and Pomegranate

The combination of chia seed and pomegranate fruit extracts could be a promising approach for managing skin pigmentation by inhibiting melanin biosynthesis.(674)

★★★

Chia in Salads

Add chia seeds to your salads, because the good fats present in chia seeds support optimal nutrient absorption, thereby aiding in lowering blood pressure effectively.(675)

★★★

Chia and Lecithin

The optimal blend of 4.04%-Chia to 1%-Lecithin while making bread enhances its nutritional value, reduces crumb firmness, and delays staling without impairing the bread's quality.(676)

Cinnamomum cassia, Cinnamomum verum

Cinnamon

Controls Blood Sugar, Reduces Inflammation, Antimicrobial

Cinnamon trees have brown bark, leathery leaves, and small yellow flowers. Cassia cinnamon is dark reddish-brown with thicker sticks and a rougher texture than Ceylon cinnamon, which is tan-brown and contains many tight sticks with soft layers.

Cinnamon, from the laurel family's aromatic tree bark, jazzes up various foods, and its essential oil is used in liqueur, perfume, and medicine. It comes in two main types: common Cassia and the rarer Ceylon.

Region:

C. cassia originated in Southern China, but farmers now grow several sub-species across East and South Asia. C. verum is native to Sri Lanka and Southern India.

Ancient Uses:

- Cinnamon dates back to 2700 B.C. utilized in Ayurvedic medicine for diarrhea, fever, and menstrual issues.
- Around 500 B.C., Egyptians, used cinnamon in embalming. During the Ptolemaic period, they developed recipes for kyphi, an aromatic incense with cinnamon.
- The Bible mentions cinnamon as "kannamon", and Moses used it in anointing oil.
- Pliny the Elder noted 350g of cinnamon was worth 15 times its weight in silver in the 1st century A.D.

Modern research:

- Cinnamon essential oil and its derivatives have potent antimicrobial properties against oral pathogens, preventing oral diseases, aiding in endodontics, and treating the candidiasis fungal infection.(98)
- Cinnamon can reduce hyperglycemia, enhance lipid profiles, and protect against oxidative damage associated with diabetes.(99)
- A 2020 study found that cinnamon supplementation could be a safe and effective way to reduce the frequency, severity, and duration of migraine attacks, as well as general pain and inflammation.(100)
- Combined clove, oregano, and cinnamon essential oils effectively kill and inhibit food bacteria, showcasing their antibacterial properties and use as food preservatives.(101)

Side Effects:

Cinnamon can cause stomach discomfort and mouth irritation. In high doses, it may lead to breathing issues, blood vessel expansion, lethargy, or seizures.

Dry cinnamon bark

Parts used:

Bark, flower, fruit, leaves, and roots

Preparations:

Cinnamon bark is available dried, fresh, as essential oil, pill, powder, or tincture.

Dosage:

Specialists propose 2-4 grams (about 1/2 to 1 tsp) of cinnamon powder in daily diet.

Synergies:

★★★

Cinnamon and Thyme

Cinnamon and thyme essential oils have enhanced antimicrobial properties against foodborne pathogens.(102)

★★★

Cinnamon and Cumin

Cinnamon and cumin essential oils exhibit enhanced antibacterial properties when combined.(103)

★★★

Cinnamon and Parsley

A blend of cinnamon and parsley essential oils synergize to stop the growth of foodborne bacteria, extending food shelf life.(104)

★★★★

Cinnamon, Celery, and Basil

Mixed cinnamon bark oil, celery seed oil, and basil oil, is shown to be effective in treating diarrhea, diarrhea-related disorders and electrolyte and fluid imbalance(105)

★★★★

Cinnamon and Thyme

Mixing cinnamon and thyme essential oils in a diffuser supports respiratory health and eases cold symptoms. It's also great for homemade cleaners, sanitizing surfaces, and as air freshener.(106)

When using cinnamon for blood sugar control, the Ceylon variety, also known as "true cinnamon," is more effective than the commonly used Cassia cinnamon.

Syzygium aromaticum

Clove

Clove is the unopened pink flower bud of the clove tree. It is typically dried and used as a spice in cooking. The clove tree is an evergreen tree that can grow up to 12 meters (40 feet) tall, with large, dark green leaves and pink flowers.

Pain Relief, Antibacterial, Enhances Digestion

Clove adds an intriguing mix of strong, sweet, and mildly bitter flavors to your favorite dishes. This magical spice also doubles as a natural remedy, known to soothe inflammation, enhance digestion, and offer pain relief. Plus, it repels pesky insects and serves as a food preservative.

Region:

Clove is native to the Moluccas (Spice Islands) in Indonesia. It is now grown in many parts of the world, including India, Madagascar, and Brazil.

Ancient Uses:

- Asian literature from China's Han period mentions cloves, under the name "chicken-tongue spice." often used for freshening breath during formal meetings. Back then, it was common for envoys from Java to bring cloves with them as a gift to the emperor. These cloves were often held in the mouth to freshen the breath during formal meetings with the emperor.
- In ancient India, cloves had a place in Ayurvedic medicine, treating common ailments such as asthma, colds, indigestion, impotence, laryngitis, low blood pressure, toothaches, and vomiting.
- Chinese medicine employed cloves for warmth and digestion improvement, as well as remedies for cholera, impotence, and vomiting. Cloves were eventually made into poultices for treating scorpion stings.
- Byzantine physician Alexander of Tralles suggested using cloves to alleviate gout and seasickness and stimulate appetite in the 6th century.
- Cloves were traditionally used for pain relief, especially in toothaches, and clove oil remains a natural numbing agent in dentistry.

Modern Research:

- A 2011 study suggested clove oil could be used as a natural antibacterial agent to combat bacteria that contribute to dental problems like cavities and gum disease.(108)
- Clove could potentially offer a way to manage Alzheimer's disease with minimal side effects and maximum cost-effectiveness. (109)
- Clove supplementation has antioxidative and organ-protective effects in diabetic patients. It reduces tissue injuries, helps control blood sugar levels, and prevents oxidative damage and cataract formation.(110)

Side Effects:

Clove is safe in small amounts. High doses can harm the liver, kidneys, or cause seizures and coma. Clove oil might cause allergies, irritation, or dermatitis.

Parts used:

Dried buds

Preparations:

Clove is available as powder or oil, and taken as a capsule or tincture.

Dosage:

The World Health Organization recommends a daily intake of clove oil of 2.5 mg/kg of your body weight..

Dried clove buds

Synergies:

★★★

Clove, Oregano, and Cinnamon

A combination of clove, oregano, and cinnamon essential oils significantly kills bacteria in food and further prevents their growth. These essential oils can therefore be potentially used as food preservatives.(111)

★★★

Clove, Cumin, Caraway, Basil, and Marjoram

A combination of clove, cumin, caraway, basil, and marjoram essential oils can combat fungal infections when applied topically over the affected area of the skin. (112)

Cocos nucifera

Coconut Oil

Boosts Heart Health and Improves Skin and Hair

Coconut oil is derived from the kernel or meat of mature coconuts harvested from the coconut palm. It has a high saturated fat content, which makes it slow to oxidize and thus resistant to rotting

Known as the 'tree of life,' the coconut tree has provided a vital source of nourishment for millions around the world for centuries. Coconut oil has been cherished for its rich nutrients and quick energy boost.

Region:

While coconut palms grow in over 80 countries, the major producers of coconut oil include Indonesia, Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, and Brazil.

Ancient Uses:

- Heart Protector: In traditional Pacific Island communities, coconut oil was a staple, believed to strengthen the heart and reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Skin Enhancer: Ancient tropical cultures valued coconut oil for its ability to moisturize and protect the skin from sun damage.
- Hair Nourisher: Known for promoting healthy hair, coconut oil has been used to combat dryness, dandruff, and promote hair growth.

Modern Research:

- Coconut oil has cholesterol-lowering, anticancer, anti-hepatosteatotic, anti-diabetic, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, and skin moisturizing properties.(743)
- Coconut oil may prevent fat deposition in blood vessels and reduce oxidative stress, potentially benefiting human health.(744)
- Coconut oil has major antimicrobial and anticancer benefits, and its lauric acid helps the body make disease-fighting monolaurin, which keeps infants from getting infections.(745)

Side Effects:

Consuming large quantities of coconut oil may lead to increased cholesterol levels due to its high saturated fat content. It's advised to use it moderately in your diet.

Parts used:

The oil extracted from the coconut kernel

Coconut kernel and oil

Preparations:

Coconut oil can be used both internally and externally. It is available in virgin, refined, or fractionated forms. Use it in cooking, as a skin moisturizer, or as a hair conditioner.

Dosage:

Dietary: Incorporate 1-2 tablespoons of coconut oil into your diet daily. It can be used for cooking, added to smoothies, or as a dairy butter substitute.

Topical: Apply a small amount of coconut oil directly onto the skin or hair. It can be used as a body lotion, face moisturizer, or hair conditioner. Apply lightly to avoid greasiness.

Synergies:

★★★★

Coconut oil and Licorice

Licorice extract combined with medium-chain triglyceride-enriched coconut oil effectively lowers serum lipid levels and reduces fatty liver in obese animal models.(746)

Coffea arabica, Coffea canephora

Coffee

Enhances Alertness and Liver Health

Coffee grows as a bush or small tree in the tropics, reaching up to 3.5 m tall and producing white flowers in spring. Its berries, which turn from green to black, contain two coffee beans. Arabica has oval leaves, while Canephora has rounder and slightly smaller leaves.

The Coffea family: small trees and shrubs that gift us with the much-loved "coffee beans". There are over 120 species of Coffea, but Arabica makes up 60-80% of global coffee production with its sweet notes, while Canephora accounts for 20-40%, waking us up with its higher caffeine jolt.

Region:

Coffea species are native to Africa, but many tropical countries worldwide now have commercial plantations of Arabica and Canephora.

Ancient Uses:

- East African tribes mixed ground coffee berries with animal fat for energy in battle. Around 1000 AD, the Ethiopians made wine from coffee berries, fermenting the dried beans in water.
- Arabs roasted coffee beans in the 9th century. By the 15th century, coffee was a "consciousness enhancer" in the Sufi shrines of modern Yemen, which rapidly spread to the rest of the Middle East and modern Turkiye, and from there into Europe and the Americas. America's first coffeehouse was established in 1676 in Boston.
- In ancient China, coffee was used for arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats), asthma, chronic diarrhea, fever, and malaria.

Modern research:

- Studies hint at coffee's ability to protect against oral and pharyngeal cancer, but more extensive studies are required on this front.(114)
- All types of coffee, including decaffeinated, instant, and ground, are protective against chronic liver disease.(115)
- Studies show that a higher intake of coffee may be linked to a decreased risk of prostate cancer.(116)

Side Effects:

Coffee is generally safe when consumed moderately. Excessive caffeine can cause anxiety, dehydration, and insomnia.

Parts used:

Seeds

Roasted coffee beans

Preparations:

To maximize coffee's benefits, drink it hot. But for those deterred by its taste, and for medicinal enhancement, caffeine tablets are the most effective consumption method.

Dosage:

Healthy adults can consume a maximum of 400 mg of caffeine daily.

Synergies:

★★★★★

Coffee and Cardamom

Mixing coffee with cardamom, which has digestive benefits, can help reduce coffee-related digestive issues such as diarrhea and provide a flavorful twist to your morning brew.(117)

★★★★

Coffee, Myrrh, and Chamomile

A combination of myrrh, chamomile flower, and coffee charcoal have anti-inflammatory effects.(118)

★★★★

Coffee and Willow bark

Coffee and willow bark water extracts show antioxidant properties when combined, potentially providing various health benefits.(119)

★★★

Coffee and Oregano

Oregano and coffee feature both antioxidant and antiinflammatory effects to higher degrees when combined.(120)

Symphytum officinale

Comfrey

It can grow up to 5 ft and produces clusters of blue, purple, and white flowers. It's famous for its black-skinned roots and long, slender leaves.

Topical Healing and Anti-Inflammatory

Known for its remarkable anti-inflammatory abilities when used topically, comfrey's roots and leaves are packed with allantoin - a growth promoter for new skin cells, alongside other skin-loving compounds. Its name, Symphytum, from the Greek "symphytos", hints at its unique gift - mending broken bones and healing wounds.

Region:

Comfrey is native to the marshy, temperate regions of Europe and Asia but now thrives in parts of Australia and North America with similar climates.

Ancient Uses:

- Comfrey, cultivated since 400 B.C., was utilized by the Greeks and Romans to heal broken bones and wounds and address respiratory issues. Dioscorides, a Greek physician, documented its medicinal uses in his book "De Materia Medica," emphasizing its efficacy in treating various ailments.
- In the Middle Ages, Comfrey earned nicknames like "boneset," "knitback," and "knitbone" for its renowned ability to heal broken bones. It was also recommended for gout and rheumatism, documented in herbals and monastery texts from 1000 A.D.
- Comfrey had a culinary use during the 1840s Irish potato famine but is now not recommended for internal consumption. During World War II, First Aid packs often included comfrey tablets.
- In agriculture, Comfrey serves as a valuable herb. Its leaves contribute nutrients to the soil as mulch and enhance the decomposition process in compost piles by feeding microbes.

Modern research:

- Comfrey herb cream is a safe and effective treatment for blunt traumas and sports injuries, with or without broken skin, in children.(121)
- Comfrey root preparations in cream form are proven to be safe and effective for easing back pain.(122)
- Creams with comfrey extract are useful for treating skin irritation. (123)

Side Effects:

Comfrey contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs), which can cause liver damage, lung damage, and cancer. The FDA has recommended that all comfrey oral products be removed from the market.

Parts used:

Leaves or other aerial parts

Preparations:

Comfrey is applied externally through compressed pastes, extracts, and ointments made of its leaves and roots.

Dosage:

Take 0.1-1 mg of comfrey or apply 10-100 mg daily, but limit to 6 weeks annually. Avoid during pregnancy or breastfeeding and don't apply to open wounds.

Dry comfrey aerial parts

Synergies:

★★★★

Comfrey, Aloe, and Goldenseal

A salve made of comfrey, aloe, and goldenseal can relieve pain caused by sprains and joint discomfort. Prepare it using a suitable base, such as coconut oil, and add a thickening agent like beeswax. When applied to the skin, these salves offer a protective barrier and effectively deliver the active ingredients to the affected area. (124)

★★★★★

Comfrey, Arnica, Calendula, and St. John's wort

A solution using equal parts of arnica, calendula, St. John's wort, and comfrey extracts diluted 1:100 in ethanol has demonstrated accelerated wound healing. (It is available as a homeopathic remedy named Similasan® Arnica plus Spray).(125)

Zea mays

Corn, Yu Mi Shu

Corn is a tall annual cereal grass bearing grains or kernels. The thread-like styles or stigmas from the female flowers of the corn plant form the cornsilk.

Supports Urinary Tract Health and Diuretic Properties

While corn itself is a staple food across the globe, cornsilk, known as Yu Mi Shu in Chinese medicine, is a valuable and versatile medicinal herb. Traditionally, it has been used for a range of ailments related to the urinary tract, as well as to support overall health.

Region:

Corn is believed to have originated in Mexico, but now it is cultivated worldwide in various climates. Cornsilk, the part of the plant used medicinally, is harvested wherever corn is grown.

Ancient Uses:

- Native American tribes used cornsilk to support urinary tract health. It was commonly brewed into tea or used as a tincture to promote urination and help alleviate symptoms of urinary tract infections, bladder irritation, and kidney stones.
- In traditional Chinese medicine, cornsilk is known as “Yu Mi Xu.” It is used as a diuretic to promote urine flow and eliminate excess fluids from the body. Cornsilk is also believed to possess anti-inflammatory properties and has been used to soothe inflammatory conditions such as cystitis and prostatitis.
- In European folk medicine, cornsilk was used topically to soothe skin irritations and conditions such as burns, wounds, and rashes. It was often applied as a poultice or infused into oils or salves to provide relief.

Modern research:

- Regular consumption of whole grain corn lowers the risk of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity, while also improving digestive health.(434)
- The husk extract of corn exhibits antimalarial and antiplasmodial properties, making it a possible treatment for malaria.(435)
- Research indicates that the phytochemicals found in corn hair have potential antioxidative properties, making them valuable for use in pharmaceuticals, food, and related industries.(436)
- Malaysian cornsilk shows mild diuretic activity in elevating urine and Na+ content at dosages from 500 to 800 mg/kg, suggesting its potential as an alternative natural diuretic agent.(437)

Parts used:

Cornsilk

Preparations:

- Cornsilk can be used fresh or dried. It is commonly infused as a tea or decoction. When preparing corn silk tea, use 1-2 teaspoons of dried cornsilk per cup of water. Allow the mixture to steep for 10-15 minutes before consumption. This tea can be ingested up to 3 times a day.
- It can also be encapsulated or tinctured. For using corn silk in tincture form, a standard dosage is 2-3 milliliters, taken up to 3 times a day.

Fresh and dried cornsilk

Viburnum opulus

Cramp bark

Cramp bark is a small plant, reaching 1-3.5 m in height. It has white flowers in clusters and dark green leaves with 3-5 lobes, about 6 cm wide. The plant also bears small berries in shades of red to black.

Alleviates Muscle Spasms and Cramps

Renowned for easing muscle cramps and spasms, cramp bark works wonders on the body's smooth muscles. It's not just its ancient track record that impresses us, though - Cramp bark has also captured modern hearts as a natural stand-in for traditional muscle relaxants and painkillers.

Region:

Cramp bark is native to North America and Europe, where it grows in thickets and woodlands.

Ancient Uses:

- In the 19th century, Eclectic practitioners used cramp bark for various cramps, from angina to menstrual pain, viewing it as a potential antispasmodic.
- Native Americans employed cramp bark to ease cramping pains, treat uterine prolapse, and even used it for various purposes like social drinking and as an eyewash.
- Mesawakis primarily used it for menstrual cramps and other body pains, while others smoked the plant as a tobacco substitute.
- In Canada, the berries were used in place of cranberries to make jellies and preserves, as their bitter flavor becomes piquant when they're processed.
- The Chinese used cramp bark's leaves as a purgative. The Japanese made vinegar extract from the berries to treat liver cirrhosis.
- Russians made "nastoika" with the berries, which was a brandy used for peptic ulcers.
- It spread to Britain through the Netherlands, having been cultivated by the Dutch in the province of Guelderland, which is how it got its name.
- Ukrainian folklore and art celebrate cramp bark, which holds symbolic significance dating back to Slavic paganism.
- In Slavic paganism, cramp bark, called "kalyna," was associated with the birth of the universe and young women's beauty.
- Cramp bark has a potential calming effect on anxiety by soothing the nervous system.

Modern research:

- Cramp bark fruit could be used as a dietary source of phytocompounds to help prevent and treat post meal increses in glucose and fatty acids by slowing the absorption of these substances by intestinal cells. (127)
- Cramp bark fruit has become increasingly interesting as a source of phenolic compounds due to its health-promoting properties, specifically in terms of preventing hepatic lipotoxicity for better liver health.(128)

Side Effects:

Cramp bark's pain-relieving qualities can be attributed in part to coumarin compounds, which also have antifungal properties. Coumarins are toxic if taken in high doses, so ensure consumption only under medical supervision. Do not take or use it on your own.

Parts used:

Dried bark

Preparations:

Dried cramp bark can be found in bulk at specialized health stores. It is also available in other forms, such as capsules, liquid extract, and teabags.

Dosage:

You can prepare a 1:2 Cramp bark extract and take 2 to 4.5 ml daily or 15 to 30 ml weekly. A decoction using 2 tsp of the herb in 1 cup of water can be consumed 3 times daily.

Fresh cramp bark

Synergies:

★★★

Crampbark supplements may also contain valerian root powder or ginger in them for relieving mentrual pain and PMS symptoms. (129)

Vaccinium macrocarpon

Cranberry

Cranberries are small, red berries that grow on low-lying shrubs. They are typically harvested in the fall and can be consumed fresh, frozen, or as a juice or supplement.

Supports Urinary Tract and Heart Health

Brimming with antioxidants, vitamin C, and a cocktail of health-boosting compounds, these ruby gems are more than just a tart treat. They're your go-to for fending urinary tract infections and nurturing heart and gut health. And that's not all – they're known to protect your pearly whites from decay and even play a role in reducing certain cancer risks.

Region:

Cranberries are native to North America, specifically to the northeastern and northcentral regions of the United States and southeastern Canada.

Ancient Uses:

- Before European settlers arrived, Native Americans utilized cranberries for dyes, food, and medicine, naming them "pakimintzen" and "sasemineash." They made pemmican from cranberries, dried deer meat, and fat.
- Cranberries, rich in proanthocyanidins (PACs), were believed to treat swelling and offer anti-inflammatory benefits for urinary and gut health.
- Native Americans used cranberries for scurvy, applied them as poultices on wounds, and mixed them with cornmeal as a remedy for blood poisoning, kidney, and stomach ailments.
- Traditionally, cranberries help prevent tooth decay by inhibiting plaque-causing bacteria growth.

Modern Research:

- Cranberry extracts could be an effective and safe way to stop colon cancer in humans.(130)
- Drinking cranberry juice while taking fish oil supplements can reduce inflammation and make rheumatoid arthritis less active. (131)
- Cranberry can reduce non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) by improving insulin sensitivity, reducing inflammation, and acting as an antioxidant.(132)

Side Effects:

Avoid excessive consumption of cranberries, as it may increase the risk of kidney stones in individuals predisposed to the condition.

Parts used:

Berries

Fresh cranberries and cranberry juice

Dosage:

For adults, it is safe to have 250–1500 mg dried cranberry powder daily for up to 6 months. About 120–1600 mg of cranberry extract can be taken orally daily for 12 weeks. Additionally, 120–750 mL of cranberry juice can be taken for up to 90 days.

Synergies:

★★★

Cranberry, Oregano and Coconut oil

A combination of cranberry juice and a few drops of natural antimicrobials, specifically coconut oil and oregano essential oil, significantly enhances overall antimicrobial properties, specifically in aiding against urinary tract infections.(133)

★★★★

Cranberry, Blueberry, and Grape

Cranberry juice extract (75%), blueberry juice extract (10%), and grape seed extract (15%) are shown to be effective at killing food-borne pathogens and treating urinary tract infections.(134)

★★★

Cranberry and Apple or Grapeseed

Cranberries have been shown to have synergistic antioxidant effects when combined with other antioxidant-rich fruits such as apples or grapeseed.(135)

★★★

Cranberry, Tart cherry, and Green tea

Cranberry extract can be combined with tart cherry and green tea extracts to help manage post-meal blood glucose levels.(136)

Drink unsweetened cranberry juice or take concentrated extracts to prevent urinary tract infections.

Cuminum cyminum

Cumin

Cumin seeds are small, oblong-shaped, and known for their strong, pungent aroma and flavor, making them a staple in various cuisines.

Enhances Digestion and Aids in Blood Sugar Regulation

Cumin, a traditional spice, is not just a culinary staple but also a beneficial herb in various traditional medicine systems. Its role in aiding digestion and potential benefits for respiratory health have been appreciated for centuries.

Region:

Cumin is widely used in regions spanning from the Middle East to Asia and Latin America.

Ancient Uses:

- In traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine, cumin has been a go-to remedy for indigestion, nausea, and flatulence. Its therapeutic use extends to stimulating digestion and providing relief in respiratory conditions. Historical records show its usage in diverse cultures, indicating its global medicinal significance.

Modern Research:

- Cumin extracts are reported to possess anti-allergic, antioxidant, anti-platelet aggregation, and glucose-lowering properties.(647)
- Powdered black cumin seeds effectively reduce the risk of hypercholesterolemia by improving the lipid or fat profile in diets.(648)
- Black cumin and its main component, thymoquinone, show potential health benefits, including protection against cancer and various disorders.(649)
- Cumin seeds and black cumin seeds are used to treat various diseases, including respiratory problems, allergic rhinitis, dyspepsia, metabolic syndrome, diabetes mellitus, inflammatory diseases, and cancer.(650)

Side Effects:

While cumin is generally safe, excessive consumption may cause digestive issues like heartburn or stomach ache in some individuals. It's always wise to use it in moderation.

Parts used:

Cumin

Seeds

Dosage:

For digestive health, a teaspoon of cumin seeds in cooked dishes or as part of a spice mix is typically sufficient. For specific conditions like diabetes management, consulting with a healthcare provider for appropriate dosing is recommended.

Synergies:

★★★★

Cumin, Coriander, and Fennel

Take half tablespoon of cumin, coriander and fennel each. Boil all the ingredients in 2 cups of water and reduce it to half. CCF tea (cumin, coriander, and fennel) offers benefits such as promoting gut health, enhancing skin radiance, alleviating digestive issues, providing relief from menstrual cramps, supporting detoxification, and boosting immunity.(651)

★★★★

Cumin and Honey

When combined, cumin seed decoction and honey may have additional health benefits, such as helping to boost the immune system and improve overall health and well-being.(652)

★★★★

Cumin in Buttermilk

Add cumin powder to sweet buttermilk and a pinch of rocksalt for enhanced digestive effects.(653)

Taraxacum officinale

Dandelion

Dandelion is an herbaceous perennial plant with bright yellow flowers and deeply-notched leaves. The leaves, stems, and roots are all edible and are often used in cooking and traditional medicine.

Liver Detoxifier and Antioxidant Booster

Dandelion is often underestimated as just a common weed. Every part of it - from leaves to roots and flowers - is a treasure trove of benefits. Think managing blood sugar levels, nurturing skin, and bolstering liver and heart health. It's packed with vital vitamins like A and C, plus minerals such as calcium and potassium.

Region:

Dandelion is native to Europe and Asia but is now found throughout the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Ancient physicians lacked knowledge of nutrition and vitamins but recognized dandelions' health benefits for various issues, from anemia to warts.
- Traditional Chinese medicine has utilized dandelions for over a millennium. Dandelion roots and leaves served as a tonic, eliminating toxins and enhancing digestive function as a gentle diuretic.
- Beyond medicinal uses, dandelions were valued for beauty and used in dye making. Gardeners still use dandelions to create nutritious tea and flavorful wine.
- European settlers introduced common and red-seeded dandelion species to North America for their nutritional and medicinal benefits.

Modern Research:

- Dandelion extract may exhibit anticancer activity by affecting malignant proliferation, disrupting cell membrane stability, reducing tumor cell adhesion, and inducing tumor cell death.(137)
- Dandelion leaf extracts contain antioxidants and antimicrobial agents.(138)
- Dandelion leaves and petals are enriched with l-chicoric acids, which show antioxidative effects. (139)

Side Effects:

Dandelion is typically safe but can trigger allergies, diarrhea, or heartburn in some. It has anticoagulant properties, raising bleeding or bruising risks, especially for individuals with bleeding disorders or on specific blood-thinning medications.

Parts used:

Dandelion roots and leaves

Leaves and roots

Preparations:

Dandelion can be eaten fresh or cooked, and when dried, it can be made into tea or taken as a capsule or tincture supplement.

Dosage:

When using fresh or dried Dandelion leaves, the recommended daily dose is 4-10 grams. If you're using fresh leaf juice or a fluid extract, it's suggested to take 1-2 teaspoons daily. For fresh roots or dried root powder, the daily dosage should be in the range of 4-8 grams.

Synergies:

★★★★

Dandelion and Milk thistle

Dandelion and milk thistle produces improvements in liver health. This blend has shown positive effects, including enhanced insulin sensitivity, improved glucose tolerance, reduced liver fat production, and increased antioxidant capacity, making it a promising approach to addressing liver issues associated with obesity. (141)

★★★★★

Dandelion, Olive, Nettle, Turmeric, and Milk thistle

Mixed dandelion, olive leaf, nettle leaf, turmeric, and milk thistle extracts taken for 5 consecutive months has shown promise in managing psoriasis.(142)

When using dandelion as a diuretic, the leaves are more effective than the roots.

Theobroma cacao

Dark Chocolate

Dark chocolate, from the seeds of the theobroma cacao tree, is rich in antioxidants, flavonoids, and contains minimal sugar compared to milk chocolate. It typically contains 50-90% cocoa solids, cocoa butter, and sugar.

Boosts Heart Health and Improves Brain Function

Esteemed by ancient Mesoamerican cultures as a gift from the gods, dark chocolate has been celebrated for centuries. The Mayans and Aztecs used cocoa beans as currency and in rituals, valuing them for their ability to improve mood and vitality. Today, modern science supports ancient wisdom, highlighting dark chocolate's benefits for heart health and cognitive function.

Region:

Native to the deep tropical regions of Mesoamerica, cacao trees are now cultivated in several tropical regions around the world, including West Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Heart Protector: Ancient healers believed in the power of cacao to strengthen the heart and improve blood circulation.
- Mood Enhancer: The Mayans and Aztecs consumed cacao in ceremonial drinks to uplift spirits, a practice now supported by science showing dark chocolate's ability to release endorphins.
- Brain Booster: Cacao was used to enhance cognitive function and clarity, a benefit attributed to its flavonoid content that modern research has validated.
- Energy Source: Known for its stimulating properties, cacao was used as an energy booster, especially by warriors and travelers.

Modern Research:

- Dark chocolate protects against atherogenesis, oxidative stress, inflammation, and endothelial function. It may also modulate blood pressure, lipid profile, platelet activation, and insulin sensitivity.(656)
- Dark chocolate with a higher cocoa content is the best option for supporting and preserving bone health, as it is a rich source of antioxidant and antiinflammatory flavonoids and dietary minerals.(657)
- Dark chocolate has been shown to decrease bad cholesterol, increase good cholesterol, and reduce the overall risk of heart failure.(658)
- Flavonoid-rich dark chocolate consumption reduces the acute prothrombotic response to psychosocial stress, therefore reducing the risk of suffering from stress-related cardiovascular issues.(659)

Side Effects:

Dark chocolate is high in calories and can be rich in sugars and fats, depending on the product. Overconsumption may lead to weight gain. People sensitive to caffeine should also consume it in moderation.

Parts used:

Cocoa beans

Preparations:

Dark chocolate can be enjoyed as a standalone treat or used in cooking and baking. It's available in various forms including bars, chips, and powder. Incorporating dark chocolate into desserts, beverages, or even savory dishes adds richness and health benefits.

Dosage:

- Oral: Consuming 1-2 squares (approximately 10-20 grams) of high-quality dark chocolate daily can provide health benefits without excessive calorie intake. For optimal health benefits, choose dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa content.

Powdered cocoa

Synergies:

★★★★

Dandelion, Olive, Nettle, Turmeric, and Milk thistle

Pairing dark chocolate, abundant in catechins, with apples, a rich source of flavonoids, promotes collagen production for healthier skin. This combination can also benefit cardiovascular health.(660)

Choose dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa for maximum antioxidants. Eat in moderation due to its calorie content.

Atropa belladonna

Deadly Nightshade

Belladonna is a perennial plant with dark green leaves and bell-shaped, purplish-brown flowers. It produces shiny black berries.

Historically Used for Pain Relief and Pupil Dilation, Highly Toxic

Deadly nightshade, also known as belladonna, is a potent and toxic plant with historical ties to witchcraft and traditional medicine. Its name "belladonna" means "beautiful woman" in Italian, referring to its past use in dilating women's pupils. Today, it is seldom used due to its extreme toxicity, except in regulated pharmaceuticals.

Region:

Belladonna is native to Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia, and it prefers shady, moist areas with limestone-rich soil.

Ancient Uses:

- In medieval Europe, extracts from the plant's leaves and berries were sometimes used for their potential pain-relieving and sedative effects. These extracts were used cautiously due to their poisonous nature, and the doses had to be carefully administered.
- Belladonna was used historically in cosmetics and eye preparations. The plant's alkaloids, particularly atropine, can cause dilation of the pupils (mydriasis). This effect was considered desirable in certain historical beauty practices, as it was believed to make the eyes appear more attractive.
- Deadly nightshade is infamous for its poisonous properties. The plant contains toxic alkaloids, such as atropine, hyoscyamine, and scopolamine, which can cause various harmful effects if ingested or absorbed.

Modern research:

- Belladonna extracts show strong antimicrobial activity against S. aureus and E. coli, emphasizing the plants' antioxidant and antimicrobial properties.(438)
- Belladonna shows promise as a tumor inhibitor.(439)
- Belladonna is traditionally used topically in Slovak folk medicine for treating skin wounds. A 2017 study indicates that Belladonna has a positive effect on the healing of aseptic surgical skin wounds.(440)

Parts used:

All parts of the Belladonna plant are toxic and contain tropane alkaloids, with the roots being the most potent. In traditional medicine, the leaves and roots were used but with extreme caution.

Preparations:

Belladonna leaves and flowers

In modern medicine, Belladonna is primarily found in homeopathic medicines and prescribed pharmaceuticals, where its dosage can be precisely controlled. In traditional herbal medicine, Belladonna was prepared as a tincture, ointment, or plaster.

Dosage:

Due to its highly toxic nature, the use of Belladonna should only be under the direct supervision of a qualified healthcare provider. The dosage varies widely based on the condition being treated and the individual's health status. It's also worth noting that due to the plant's inherent dangers, many countries have regulated or banned its sale.

Harpagophytum procumbens

Devil's Claw

Devil's claw is a leafy perennial with branching roots and shoots. Devil's claw gets its name from its tough-looking fruits, which have barbed hooks.

Arthritis Relief and Anti-Inflammatory

Devil's claw's healing properties are attributed to harpagoside—a compound with analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties. Indigenous Africans call it "kamangu," while in Afrikaans, it's known as "teufelskralle." Its scientific name, derived from the Greek words "harpago" (hook) and "phyton" (plant), perfectly captures its unique nature.

Region:

Devil's claw is found in the eastern and southeastern parts of Namibia, Southern Botswana, and the Kalahari region of the Northern Cape, South Africa.

Ancient Uses:

- The Khoisan, representing some of the earliest humans, have inhabited the Kalahari Desert for over 20,000 years. They traditionally brewed tea from devil's claw root, believed by anthropologists to contribute to their health. This root was also used to treat ailments like fevers, indigestion, joint pain, and labor pain.
- In 1906, German soldier G.H. Mehnert observed locals using devil's claw medicinally. After the war, he introduced it to Germany, popularizing it in Western medicine.
- By the late 1990s, European studies confirmed its effectiveness against ailments like arthritis and tendonitis.

Modern research:

- Devil's claw extract, at certain doses, increases the hormone CCK in rats, leading to reduced body weight, suggesting a potential weight-reducing effect, which may be beneficial for weight management.(143)
- Devil's claw root extract contains beneficial ingredients with properties that could help with inflammation, cell regeneration, pain relief, and immune system support.(144)

Side Effects:

Devil's claw can cause gastrointestinal issues if not taken 30 minutes before meals and has side effects like allergies, arrhythmia, blood pressure changes, tinnitus, and nausea. It's not advised for diabetics, hypoglycemics, or those with heart or gastrointestinal conditions.

Parts used:

Roots and tubers

Sliced devil's claw tuber

Preparations:

Devil's claw is available in capsules, extracts, powders, tablets, teas, tinctures, and ointments.

Dosage:

For daily use, take 1 tsp (4.5g); for appetite loss, reduce to 1/3 tsp (1.5g). Mix up to 2.5mg of concentrated alcohol-based extract with water daily. With a tincture, take 1 tsp (4.5g) three times a day for a specific period. Devil's claw powder is ideal for medicinal tea due to easier quantity control.

Synergies:

★★★★

Devil's claw, Rosehip, and Boswellia

Combine devil's claw, rosehip, and boswellia extracts for comprehensive osteoarthritis support, combating its various symptoms, such as inflammation and pain.(145)

★★★★

Devil's claw and Jambul

Devil's claw and Jambul has been used for treating arthritis, rheumatism, and glycemic issues, both orally and topically, with potential benefits due to antioxidants, phenols, tannins, and volatile oils.(146)

★★★★

Devil's claw, Black garlic, Cat's claw, Camu-camu, Blackcurrant, and Citrus

When combined devil's claw, black garlic, cat's claw, camu-camu, blackcurrant, and citrus fruit extracts can help alleviate inflammation associated with chronic diseases.(147)

Angelica sinensis

Dong Quai

A tall plant with umbrella-like white flowers that produce winged fruits. Beneath lies its prized chunky, brownish-yellow roots.

Nurtures Women's Health and Blood Circulation

Dong Quai, a star of traditional Chinese medicine, is renowned for its reputation in women's health. Known for its sweetly aromatic scent, it's been used for more than a thousand years to restore balance to the body. But Dong Quai isn't just a 'woman's herb'; its benefits extend to everyone, making it a valuable addition to the herbal pantry.

Region:

Originally from the high-altitude regions of China, Japan, and Korea, Dong Quai, also known as 'female ginseng', thrives in the cold, damp conditions of these areas. Today, it has found a home in many parts of the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Women's Health and Menstrual Support: Dong quai is widely known and highly valued for its use in women's health. It is often used in traditional Chinese medicine to support menstrual health, regulate menstrual cycles, and alleviate symptoms associated with menstruation, such as cramps and irregular periods. It is considered a "female tonic" herb.
- Blood Tonic and Circulation: It is believed to nourish and invigorate the blood, promoting healthy circulation and addressing conditions associated with blood deficiency, such as pale complexion, fatigue, and dizziness.
- General Health and Vitality: It is believed to strengthen the body, boost vitality, and enhance overall well-being. It is often included in herbal formulas to support overall health and balance.

Modern research:

- A study investigating the hematopoietic effects of dong quai showed that it could be a promising treatment for anemia. (441)
- An analysis of the pharmacological effects of Dong Quai herbal extracts and its major active component, ferulic acid (FA), suggests that it may be useful in developing a wound-healing pharmaceutical product. (442)

Parts used:

Roots

Fresh and dried dong quai roots

Preparations:

- Raw root: It can be simmered in soups or brewed into a tonic tea.
- Powdered or Dried: The root can be ground or dried for ease of use.
- Tincture and capsules: These are used for a more concentrated dose and convenient use. Use as advised.
- Topical creams: These are used to apply directly to the skin for various issues. Use as advised.

Side Effects:

Dong quai may raise the risk of bleeding, especially if you take blood thinners, such as warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), or aspirin.

Rosa spp.

Dried Rose, Rose Petals

Roses are deciduous or semi-evergreen shrubs featuring prickly stems, beautiful, often fragrant flowers, and glossy foliage.

Calming, Digestive Support, and Anti-inflammatory

Known for their vibrant colors and intoxicating scent, roses have been a symbol of love and beauty for centuries. Beyond their aesthetic allure, roses, particularly their dried petals – have found a place in traditional medicine and culinary practices around the world.

Region:

Roses are cultivated all over the world, with thousands of species and cultivars existing. They are native to temperate regions in the Northern Hemisphere, particularly Asia and Europe.

Ancient Uses:

- In Ayurveda, dried rose petals were considered cooling and calming in nature. They were used to balance excess heat (Pitta) in the body and were believed to have a soothing effect on the mind and emotions. Rose petals are often used in Ayurvedic preparations for conditions like acidity, skin inflammation, and stress management.
- Dried rose petals were used to support digestive health. They were believed to have mild laxative properties and can help relieve indigestion, bloating, and constipation. Rose petal tea is often consumed to promote healthy digestion.
- In traditional Chinese medicine, dried rose petals were used to promote Qi (energy) and blood circulation. They are believed to help alleviate stagnation and promote a healthy flow of energy and blood in the body. They are often included in herbal formulas for conditions like menstrual disorders and stagnant Qi patterns.

Modern research:

- The discovery of antibacterial activity in rose petals suggests their potential use in treating diarrheal diseases and various infections.(443)
- A 2018 study concluded that rose petals are a valuable natural source of antioxidants due to their high phenol content.(444)
- A 2020 study indicates that red rose petals possess anti-inflammatory properties.(445)

Parts used:

The petals of the rose plant are most frequently used. Rose hip (fruit) is also used for its high vitamin C content. The petals are collected, dried, and then stored for use.

Dried rose petals

Preparations:

Dried rose petals can be used in various ways. They can be steeped as a tea by using up to two teaspoons of dried petals, used as a flavoring agent in cooking and baking, or added to bathwater for a luxurious soak. Rose petals are also used in the creation of rose water, essential oils, and various cosmetic products.

Rose essential oil

Synergies:

★★★★

Rose and Other mild-flavored herbs

A combination of dried rose petals and other mild-flavored herbs such as chamomile, mint, or lemon balm can be boiled in water to make a pleasant herbal tea that has mood-improving effects due to synergistic antioxidant properties.(446)

Rose oil is known to be an emollient, meaning it softens and moisturizes your hair

Echinacea spp.

Echinacea

Immune Booster and Anti-Inflammatory

Echinacea is a perennial plant that grows up to 1 meter (3 feet) tall. It has large, cone-shaped flowers in various colors, such as pink, purple, and orange. The leaves and roots of the plant are also used in traditional medicine.

Echinacea, a plant cherished for centuries by Native Americans for its remarkable immune-boosting qualities. Widely recognized for preventing colds and flu, it also helps reduce inflammation, relieve pain, and soothe allergy symptoms. It's packed with a wealth of beneficial compounds like alkamides, polysaccharides, and flavonoids.

Region:

Echinacea is native to North America and can be found in the central and eastern regions of the continent.

Ancient Uses:

- Echinacea was historically used by Native Americans for infections and wounds, and to treat ailments like syphilis, scarlet fever, malaria, diphtheria, and blood poisoning. Its use in the US waned with the advent of antibiotics.
- In traditional medicine, it's been applied for skin conditions like eczema and psoriasis due to its anti-inflammatory properties. It was also used for snake bites, venereal diseases, and as a general wellness tonic.
- Echinacea has been used to alleviate allergy symptoms, boost immunity against colds and flu, and relieve pains like toothaches and headaches.

Modern Research:

- Echinacea supplementation may balance the immune system by reducing inflammation.(148)
- A component of Echinacea extract inhibits an enzyme that raises tissue permeability, facilitating wound healing by preventing bacterial spread into healthy cells.(149)
- Experimental validation in a 2021 study supports the use of unrefined echinacea root extracts by Indigenous North Americans for treating peripheral inflammatory pain like arthritis and burns.(150)

Side Effects:

Echinacea is safe for short-term oral and topical use but can lead to stomach problems, rashes, and allergies. Creams are safe for up to 12 weeks. People with autoimmune disorders should avoid it, as it may exacerbate their conditions.

Parts used:

Leaves, roots, and flowers

Crushed echinacea root

Preparations:

Echinacea can be taken as tea, capsule, or tincture, and used topically as cream or oil. It's also found in mouthwashes, supplements, and throat sprays.

Dosage:

For dry powdered extract, take 300-500 mg of Echinacea thrice daily. If using liquid extract tinctures, take 2.5 milliliters (mL) thrice a day, or up to 10 mL daily.

Synergies:

★★★★

Echinacea, Wild indigo, and White cedar

The combination of Echinacea root, wild indigo root, and white cedar leaf tips (Esberitox N) enhances the immune system's ability to fight infections, making it potentially helpful in managing respiratory infections and supporting overall health.(151)

★★★★

Echinacea, Astragalus, and Licorice

Echinacea, Astragalus, and licorice herbal tinctures stimulate immune cells within 24 hours of ingestion, which helps the body produce a stronger immune system.(152)

★★★★

Echinacea, Fennel, Rosemary, and Basil

A combination of fennel, rosemary, echinacea, and basil has the potential to be used for the control of common stored grain pests, making them promising natural alternatives for pest management and foodgrain storage.(153)

For immune-boosting effects, start taking echinacea at the first sign of a cold for the best results, as its effectiveness diminishes once symptoms are fully developed.

Sambucus nigra

Elderflower

Cold, Flu, and Sinus Relief

Elderflower is a deciduous shrub or small tree that grows up to 6 meters (20 feet) tall. It has green leaves, clusters of small white or cream-colored flowers, and dark purple or black berries. The plant's berries, flowers, and leaves are used in traditional medicine and cooking.

Elderflower has long been relied upon to treat colds, flu, and sinus infections. Packed with flavonoids and antioxidants, it serves as a natural source of wellness. Elderflowers can be transformed into soothing teas, invigorating syrups, and delightful cordials, offering a comforting and natural remedy for colds and flu.

Region:

Elderflower is native to Europe, Asia, and North America and can be found in many temperate regions worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Botanists trace elder tree global spread to around 12,000 BCE during the Ice Age. Greek and Roman physicians, like Dioscorides, Hippocrates, and Pliny, wrote about them.
- In 17th-century England, elder trees were believed to ward off evil. Elderflower tinctures treat various illnesses. European use of elderflower cordials and syrups dates back to the 16th century, with the first commercial cordial in the 1980s.
- Elder trees thrived in the New World, notably among Native Americans like the Mohegans, who used elderflower for medicinal purposes, including inducing perspiration, reducing fevers, and relieving colic in infants.
- For colds and flu, elderflower has been known to alleviate symptoms. Elderflower syrup or tea is served for congestion, fevers, and sore throats.
- Elderflower has been historically used to increase urine production and reduce bloating.
- Elderflower's anti-inflammatory properties have been known to improve breathing, reduce nasal inflammation and swelling, and relieve sinus congestion.

Modern Research:

- Elderflower and bilberry fruits from wild-growing plants in Georgia are rich in phenolic compounds and anthocyanins, offering a cheap alternative source of natural antioxidants for pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and food industries.(160)
- Elderflower and elderberry extracts may have the potential to regulate steroidogenesis in ovarian cells, potentially improving reproductive health and fertility.(161)
- Elderflower extracts contain bioactive compounds that regulate glucose and lipid metabolism and have several applications in the pharmaceutical industry.(162)

Side Effects:

Excessive consumption can lead to risks like diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting due to cyanide-producing chemicals in some elder tree parts. Cooking elderflower removes this risk.

Parts used:

Berries, flowers, and leaves

Preparations:

Elderflower can be consumed as a tea, oral supplement in capsule or tincture form, or made into cordials, and syrups.

Dosage:

Tea: Steep 1-2 tsp of dried elderflower in hot water for 5-10 minutes. It's generally safe to drink 2-3 cups of elderflower tea per day.

Elderflowers and berries

Synergies:

★★★★

Elderflower, Primrose, Yellow dock, Vervain, and Gentian

The combination of elderflowers (36 mg), primrose flower with calyx (36 mg), yellow dock (36 mg), vervain herb (36 mg), and gentian root(12 mg) (Sinupret forte®) has shown promise in the treatment of bronchitis, headaches, and sinus infections.(163)

★★★

Elderflower, Flax seed, Mullein, and Licorice

An oral lozenge containing elderflowers, flax seed, mullen leaf, and licorice root reduced sneezing in animals and accelerated recovery when exposed to dust and allergens. (164)

Inula helenium

Elecampane

A tall, robust plant with large, bright green leaves and vibrant, sunflower-like yellow blossoms. Beneath the ground is the chunky, aromatic root used in herbal medicine for centuries.

Respiratory Aid and Antimicrobial

An ancient herb with a history steeped in folklore and healing. Elecampane was believed to have sprung from the tears of Helen of Troy, but it's more than just a tale of mythology. Elecampane's true beauty lies in its potent roots, rich with wellness-promoting properties that have been cherished for centuries.

Region:

Originally native to Europe and parts of Asia, Elecampane, also known as horse heal or elf dock, has since migrated to other parts of the world, including North America, where it grows in meadows, fields, and along the roadsides.

Ancient Uses:

- The Greeks and Romans used Elecampane as a digestive tonic and respiratory aid.
- Medieval societies valued it as a culinary spice and medicinal herb. It was even said to be used by ancient veterinarians to aid horses' health, leading to one of its popular names, 'Horse Heal'.
- Elecampane has been traditionally used as a respiratory tonic. It has expectorant properties, helping to promote the clearance of mucus from the respiratory tract. It has been used to alleviate symptoms of respiratory conditions such as coughs, bronchitis, and asthma.
- It has been used topically in herbal preparations to help soothe skin conditions, such as wounds, burns, and ulcers. Additionally, it has been used internally to help combat bacterial and fungal infections.

Modern research:

- Elecampane is often prescribed to treat respiratory and skin conditions.(447)
- The extract from the aerial parts of elecampane may be a potential source of natural anticancer properties.(448)
- A 2018 study suggests that elecampane essential oil could be a promising natural agent for treating candidiasis, a fungal infection.(449)

Parts used:

Roots

Preparations:

- Decoction: The root can be boiled and used as a tea to soothe the digestive and respiratory systems, using up to two teaspoons, three times daily.
- Tincture: A concentrated extract of the root can be used for its wellness benefits.
- Candied Root: The root can be candied and eaten for respiratory support and as a digestive aid. Typically consumed in moderation, like a lozenge.
- Extract: Boil 18 grams of elecampane roots in 144 grams of water. Filter the mixture to obtain a clear liquid (filtrate). Take the filtrate orally three times a day.
- This remedy is reported to be effective in relieving kidney, spleen, back, joint, and anginal pains.
- Capsules and Powders: These forms offer a convenient way to incorporate Elecampane into your health regimen. Powders may be taken internally in a dose of 1-4 grams, while syrup in a dose of 15-60ml.

Fresh and dried elecampane roots

Synergies:

★★★★

Elecampane, Basil, and Hyssop

Mix elecampane with basil and hyssop for coughs and bronchitis.(450)

★★★★★

Elecampane, Brimstone, Water lily, and Bay salt

To create a healing ointment, combine fine brimstone powder, elecampane root powder, dried water lily root powder, and a small amount of dried and powdered bay salt. This remedy showcases the potential synergistic action of these natural ingredients for promoting skin health in dogs.(451)

Ephedra sinica

Ephedra, Ma Huang

Respiratory Support and Stimulant

Ephedra is a gymnosperm shrub that often grows in dry, sandy, or rocky environments. It features slender, yellow-green branches and scale-like leaves.

Ephedra, known as Ma Huang in traditional Chinese medicine, is a potent plant that has been used for over 5,000 years. It is most famous for its bronchodilatory and stimulant effects, but it is also a controversial herb due to potential side effects and misuse.

Region:

Ephedra, or Ma Huang, is native to the steppe and desert regions of Central Asia and Mongolia.

Ancient Uses:

- Ephedra has been used in traditional Chinese medicine to support respiratory health. It is believed to have bronchodilator and expectorant properties, making it useful for alleviating symptoms of respiratory conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, and nasal congestion.
- In traditional practices, ephedra has been used as a stimulant to increase energy levels and enhance physical performance. It was believed to have thermogenic properties, potentially aiding in weight loss and boosting athletic performance.
- Nasal Decongestant: It was employed to relieve nasal congestion caused by allergies, colds, or sinusitis. The plant's vasoconstrictive properties were thought to help reduce swelling and open up the nasal passages.

Modern research:

- Ephedra sinica shows promise in reducing obesity and hyperglycemia, making it a potential ingredient for treating obesity-related glucose intolerance.(452)
- Non-alkaloids from ephedra show therapeutic potential for hyperlipidemia treatment by enhancing lipid metabolism safely.(453)
- Three Ephedra alkaloids exhibit antiviral effects in vitro, potentially attributed to their ability to inhibit viral replication and modulate inflammatory responses.(454)

Parts used:

The dried green stems of the Ephedra plant are used for their medicinal properties. They are typically harvested in the autumn, dried, and then used in various preparations.

Fresh and dried ephedra stems

Preparations:

Ephedra can be consumed as a tea or decoction, made into a tincture, or processed into a powder for capsules. It was traditionally often combined with other herbs such as licorice or cinnamon. Generally, a daily dose might range from 1 to 4 grams of the dried herb in decoction. Due to serious side effects like high blood pressure and heart issues, supervision by a healthcare provider is essential. Dietary supplements containing Ephedra have been banned in many countries, including the U.S., due to safety concerns.

Synergies:

★★★

Ephedra, Acacia catechu, Sweet chestnut, and Shilajit

A combination of acacia catechu, sweet chestnut, ephedra, and shilajit extracts shows outstanding anti-bacterial activity.(455)

Eucalyptus spp.

Eucalyptus

Eucalyptus is a large evergreen tree that can grow up to 90 meters (300 feet) tall. It has smooth bark, glossy green leaves, and small white or cream-colored flowers. The leaves and oil of the tree are used in traditional medicine and aromatherapy.

Respiratory Aid and Pain Reliever

Eucalyptus, renowned for its expectorant, decongestant, and anti-inflammatory qualities, serves as an antiseptic, antimicrobial, and antioxidant as well. In aromatherapy, the invigorating essential oil of eucalyptus is cherished for its refreshing scent, bringing a revitalizing touch to the senses.

Region:

Eucalyptus is native to Australia but is now widely cultivated in Asia, Europe, and North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Baron Ferdinand von Muller recognized eucalyptus's antiseptic properties. In 1955, France sent eucalyptus seeds to Algeria to combat malaria. Its oil gained prominence during World War I, mitigating a meningitis outbreak amid the 1919 flu epidemic.
- Native to Australia and essential to koalas, eucalyptus has spread to Africa, India, and Southern Europe. In the U.S., it's common in California.
- Eucalyptus oil's antiseptic qualities aid in healing skin conditions, while its anti-inflammatory properties offer pain relief and muscle relaxation. It's also used for respiratory health, clearing mucus and alleviating cold symptoms.

Modern Research:

- Clinical studies have established that eucalyptus plant may be beneficial in preventing and treating various illnesses due to its anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, anti-viral, anti-oxidant, anti-nociceptive, anti-cancer, anti-diabetic properties. (155)
- Eucalyptus oil can effectively inhibit dangerous microbes and ward off oxidative stress caused by free radicals.(156)
- A 2022 study suggests that eucalyptus products are suitable for treating coughs associated with respiratory illnesses like upper respiratory tract infections and bronchitis.(157)

Side Effects:

Consume eucalyptus in small amounts as a food flavoring, but avoid ingesting pure eucalyptus oil, as just 3.5 mL can be lethal. Symptoms of poisoning include diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, coma, dizziness, drowsiness, suffocation feelings, muscle pain, and seizures. However, eucalyptol, a component of eucalyptus oil, is safe for daily intake for up to 12 weeks.

Parts used:

Eucalyptus oil

Leaves and oil

Preparations:

Experience eucalyptus benefits through tea, oral supplements, inhalation, or topical cream application. Use eucalyptus essential oil in baths, diffusers, and for direct body application in pain management. Boost its effectiveness by blending with oils like peppermint.

Dosage:

- Tea: Steep 1-2 tsp of dried eucalyptus leaves in hot water for 5-10 minutes. Drinking 2-3 cups of eucalyptus tea daily is generally safe.
- Cream or oil: Apply to skin as needed or up to 4 times daily.

Synergies:

★★★

Eucalyptus, Peppermint, and Ethanol

The combination of peppermint oil, eucalyptus oil, and ethanol was found to enhance cognitive performance such as memory and problem-solving, induce muscle relaxation, and promote mental relaxation.(158)

★★★★

Eucalyptus, Buchu, and Hopbush

The combination of eucalyptus, buchu, and hopbush demonstrated antibacterial activity. Various combinations of these plants exhibited antimicrobial properties. (159)

Oenothera biennis

Evening Primrose

Evening Primrose is a biennial herb with a distinct appearance. It grows up to 1.5 meters tall, featuring lance-shaped leaves and striking yellow flowers that open in the evening, hence its name.

Skin Health and Hormonal Balance

Evening Primrose, known for its beautiful nocturnal blooms, has been a staple in traditional remedies for centuries. Its unique oil, rich in essential fatty acids, has been revered for its health benefits, particularly for skin conditions and hormonal imbalances.

Region:

Evening Primrose is native to North America, thriving in various environments from rocky soils to open prairies.

Ancient Uses:

- Native American tribes valued evening primrose for its healing properties, using it to soothe skin irritations and improve wound healing.
- European settlers adopted its use, particularly for skin ailments and to enhance women's health.

Modern Research:

- Evening primrose features anti-inflammatory, antiarthritic, analgesic, antioxidant, cytotoxic, antidiabetic, and antimicrobial health benefits.(615)
- Oral evening-primrose oil has beneficial effects in relieving symptoms associated with various conditions such as atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, Sjögren's syndrome and asthma. It significantly improves atopic eczema symptoms when taken in high dosage, with no reported side-effects.(616)
- It also shows promise as an anti-cancer therapy due to its high content of linoleic acid and Î± -linolenic acid.(617)

Side Effects:

Some may experience mild side effects like headache, stomach upset, or nausea when using evening primrose oil. It's important to note that due to its influence on hormones, it should be used cautiously in hormone-sensitive conditions.

Parts used:

The seeds of the evening primrose plant are primarily used for their oil, which is extracted and utilized for medicinal purposes.

Evening primrose

Dosage:

- For skin conditions and hormonal balance, evening primrose oil is commonly taken in doses ranging from 500 to 1,000 mg per day.
- It's advisable to begin with a lower dose and adjust as needed, following the product's specific guidelines.

Synergies:

★★★★

Evening primrose, Chia, Golden flax, Phacelia, and Fenugreek

The germination of chia, golden flax, evening primrose, phacelia, and fenugreek seeds, inc combination significantly improves their mineral content, antioxidant properties, and phenolic content, leading to better nutritional values compared to un-germinated seeds.(618)

★★★★★

Eevening primrose, Soy isoflavones, Black cohosh, and Chasteberry

A combination of 100 mg soy isoflavones, 80 mg black cohosh, 40 mg chasteberry, and 500 mg evening primrose oil taken for 12 weeks shows improvements in several aspects of skin health, improves antioxidant levels, and improves oxidative stress status in post-menopausal women.(619)

Foeniculum vulgare

Fennel

Fennel is a perennial herb that grows up to 2 meters (6 feet) tall. It has feathery leaves, yellow flowers, and a bulbous base. The seeds, leaves, and bulbs of the plant are used in traditional medicine and cooking.

Digestive Aid and Respiratory Support

Renowned as an expectorant, carminative, and diuretic, fennel is celebrated in traditional medicine for its remarkable digestive and respiratory benefits. The seeds of the fennel plant, with their sweet and licorice-like flavor, are better received by the stomach than cumin and dill seeds.

Region:

Fennel grows wild in Europe on sandy and chalky soils and is now oftencultivated in the eastern portions of the United States.

Ancient Uses:

- Pliny, in AD 23-79, credited fennel with medicinal properties, treating 22 ailments, and noted serpents rubbing against it for improved eyesight.
- In medieval England, fennel was a popular condiment and appetite suppressant, a staple in King Edward I's household.
- Hippocrates suggested fennel for wet nurses to increase milk supply, and Greeks used it for slimming, calling it "Marathron."
- Fennel served as an antidote to poisons in various cultures, and Culpepper in the 1600s believed it countered poisonous mushrooms and snake bites.
- Fennel helped with digestive issues, acts as a carminative for abdominal pain, and improves eyesight.
- Fennel has been used to address respiratory issues, including coughs, colds, bronchitis, sore throat, and nasal congestion, in traditional use.

Modern Research:

- Fennel oil has positive effects on the liver and kidney tissues, and it also helps balance certain dangerous and damaging chemicals in the body. It seems that fennel oil has antioxidant, anti-cancer, and anti-inflammatory properties.(165)
- Fennel oil may have protective properties for the liver and kidneys, as well as antioxidant properties, thanks to the presence of the aromatic compound known as trans-anethole.(166)
- Fennel is an effective and safe treatment for reducing menopausal symptoms in postmenopausal women, with no serious side effects.(167)
- Fennel and trans-anethole may be beneficial in preventing and treating stress-induced neurological disorders.(168)

Side Effects:

Fennel may cause stomach upset, seizures, allergic reactions, and increased sensitivity to the sun. Use with caution if you're nursing or pregnant, and sensitive to estrogen-like compounds.

Parts used:

Seeds, leaves, and bulb

Preparations:

Fennel is a popular spice and can be made into creams, essential oils, teas, seed extracts, and seed powders.

Fresh fennel and fennel oil

Dosage:

Steep 1-2 tsp of dried fennel seeds in hot water for 5-10 minutes. You can drink up to 3 cups of tea daily.

Synergies:

★★★

Fennel, Chamomile, and Ginger

A combination of fennel, chamomile, and ginger is effective in relieving dysmenorrhea symptoms such as indigestion, bloating, and nausea.(169)

★★★★

Fennel, Rosemary, Echinacea, and Basil

A combination of essential oils from fennel, rosemary, echinacea, and basil has the potential to control common stored grain pests, making them natural alternatives for pest management and foodgrain storage.(170)

Chew on fennel seeds after meals to aid in digestion and freshen breath. The anethole in fennel can help relax the muscles in your gastrointestinal tract.

Trigonella foenum-graecum

Fenugreek

Fenugreek grows up to 2–3 feet (60–90 centimeters) tall. It has green leaves consisting of three small obovate to oblong leaflets. It also has white flowers and pods with golden-brown seeds.

Hormonal Balance and Diabetes Management

Beyond the kitchen, fenugreek takes center stage as a popular dietary supplement and an integral part of traditional medicine. Its name, derived from the Latin "faenugraecum," nods to its connection with "Greek hay." Fenugreek boasts an aromatic profile reminiscent of maple syrup, courtesy of the chemical sotolon.

Region:

Fenugreek is native to Asia, Europe, and the Mediterranean.

Ancient Uses:

- Fenugreek, a globally cultivated medicinal plant with a deep history in China, Egypt, Greece, India, and the Roman Empire, shows early use near the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in the 6th millennium B.C.
- In the 8th century B.C., Babylonian King Marduk-apla-iddina II documented fenugreek cultivation on a clay tablet.
- Diverse civilizations throughout history leveraged fenugreek's medicinal properties. Egyptians used it for embalming, childbirth, and burns; Hippocrates for soothing and tumor treatment; Romans for various ailments.
- In the first Jewish-Roman war, fenugreek had a strategic role, impeding Roman climbs with boiling oil. Today, it holds cultural significance during Rosh Hashanah, symbolizing blessings.
- Fenugreek aids hormonal balance, alleviating PMS, menopause symptoms, and regulating testosterone.

Modern research:

- Fenugreek flavonoids show strong antidiabetic effects, reducing blood glucose, increasing serum insulin levels, and improving pancreatic islet and kidney conditions.(172)
- Fenugreek shoots show higher antioxidant, antimicrobial, and DNA-protective properties than fenugreek seeds.(173)
- Fenugreek seeds contain steroidal saponins and sapogenins with potential anti-diabetic properties, thus having great potential in the treatment of diabetes.(174)

Side Effects:

Although generally mild, fenugreek may cause gastrointestinal issues. Topical use can irritate sensitive skin. It may exacerbate asthma and lower glucose levels in diabetics. Pregnant women should avoid it due to potential uterine contractions.

Parts used:

Leaves and seeds

Preparations:

Fenugreek is available as dried or fresh leaves and ground or whole seeds. It is also used as an extract and in many products, such as animal feed and cosmetics.

Dosage:

Fenugreek seed powder can be taken orally in doses of 5–10 grams daily for up to 3 years. Fenugreek seed extract has most often been used orally in doses of 0.6–1.2 grams each day.

Fresh fenugreek leaves and seeds

Synergies:

★★★★

Fenugreek and Madagascar periwinkle

Combining 0.5 ml/kg body weight of Madagascar periwinkle leaf juice with 50 mg/kg of body weight of fenugreek seed powder demonstrates hypoglycemic effects in normal and diabetic animal models.(175)

★★★★

Fenugreek and Garlic

The combination of fenugreek seeds and garlic provides benefits such as protecting the cardiovascular system.(176)

★★★★

Fenugreek and Onion

The combined of fenugreek seeds and onions in the diet has been proven to mitigate the formation of cholesterol gallstones and decrease cholesterol levels in animal models. This synergistic combination effectively counteracts the adverse effects of a high-cholesterol diet. (177)

Tanacetum parthenium

Feverfew

Migraine Relief and Anti-inflammatory

Feverfew is a perennial herb that grows up to 60 cm (2 feet) tall. It has feathery leaves and small daisy-like flowers, usually yellow or white. The leaves and flowers of the plant are used in traditional medicine.

Known for its anti-inflammatory and analgesic qualities, feverfew has been a trusted solution for alleviating headaches, migraines, fever, and various pains. The bitter-tasting leaves of the feverfew plant serve not only as a seasoning but also as a delightful inclusion in salads, contributing both flavor and potential health benefits.

Region:

Feverfew is native to Europe and Asia but is now widely cultivated in other regions, such as North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Feverfew, a member of the daisy family, was used by Ancient Greek physicians to treat inflammation and menstrual cramps. It is now primarily used to relieve migraines and prevent their recurrence. Scientific studies support its effectiveness for this purpose.
- Claudius Galenus of Pergamum (129-199 AD) and Dioscorides (60 AD) wrote about it. They called feverfew "Parthénium," which means "virgin" or "virgin goddess."
- In ancient times, this perennial herb was used to treat women's health concerns.
- The Romans used feverfew as an emmenagogue to enhance or stimulate menstruation. They also used it during complicated childbirth procedures to aid in the expulsion of the placenta.
- By the 18th century, feverfew had become popular in Great Britain. It was used to treat headaches, stomach pains, and toothaches. Its usage also addressed the initial stages of joint inflammation and rheumatism.
- Dr. John Hill, an English physician, pharmacist, and botanist, praised the feverfew plant in his 1772 book "The Family Herbal" as superior to anything previously used to treat headaches. His rave review made feverfew "the aspirin of the 18th century" in England.

Modern Research:

- Feverfew flower extract is effective in relieving acute, inflammatory, articular, and neuropathic pain.(178)
- Feverfew essential oil may be a safe and effective alternative to antibiotics in some cases.(179)
- Feverfew essential oil is commonly used in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries due to its active component, parthenolide. This compound is beneficial in treating fevers, migraines, and rheumatoid arthritis.(180)

Side Effects:

Feverfew can cause side effects, including digestive issues. Chewing fresh leaves can be unsafe, causing mouth sores, swelling, and loss of taste.

Parts used:

Leaves

Preparations:

Make feverfew into a hot drink by steeping 1-2 teaspoons of feverfew powder in boiling water for about 10 minutes. Alternatively, add feverfew tincture to juice or water.

Dosage:

For adults, oral feverfew doses of 50–150 mg daily are safe for up to 4 months.

Feverfew tea

Synergies:

★★★

Feverfew and Butterbur

Feverfew and butterbur (Petasites hybridus) combine for improved migraine prevention. These two herbs have shown promise when used together to reduce the frequency and intensity of migraine attacks.(181)

Linum usitatissimum

Flaxseed

Flaxseed is the seed of the flax plant, which is an annual herb that grows up to 1 meter (3 feet) tall. It has narrow blue-green leaves and small yellow or blue flowers. The seeds are used in traditional medicine as a source of oil and fiber.

Promotes Heart Health and Digestive Regularity

Known for its abundant reserves of omega-3 fatty acids, lignans, and fiber, flaxseed takes center stage in promoting heart health, reducing cholesterol levels, and ensuring regularity in bowel movements. Beyond its nutritional prowess, flaxseed oil shines as a versatile cooking companion and a popular dietary supplement.

Region:

Flaxseed is native to the Mediterranean but is now widely cultivated in other areas, such as Europe, Asia, and North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Flaxseed is among the world's oldest crops, planted since the beginning of civilization. In 500 BCE, the Greek physician Hippocrates used it to treat intestinal discomfort, while the Ancient Egyptians used it as food and medicine. One of the main traditional uses of this oily seed was to relieve constipation.
- In the 8th century, King Charlemagne considered flaxseed so vital to the health of his people that he established laws and regulations to regulate its consumption.
- North American pioneers used flaxseed flowers for dressing burns and cuts. The plant's fibers were used to make linen, while the oil extracted from the seeds was used to produce various products like paint.
- Flaxseed has been used as a laxative to promote bowel movements and relieve constipation.
- Flaxseed has been traditionally used to improve heart health by lowering cholesterol and triglyceride levels and decreasing the risk of heart disease.
- Flaxseed oil has been used to improve skin health and treat conditions like eczema and psoriasis.

Modern Research:

- Flaxseed supplementation significantly reduces total cholesterol, triglyceride, and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels, potentially slowing heart disease progression.(182)
- Consuming flaxseed can be a helpful treatment for improving lipid levels and reducing cardiovascular risk factors, while also aiding in weight loss.(183)
- Ingesting flaxseed in various forms can protect against heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, dyslipidemia, inflammation, and other health issues. It helps to regulate blood lipids, fasting blood sugar, insulin resistance, body weight, waist circumference, body mass, and blood pressure.(184)

Side Effects:

Higher doses may cause bloating, gas, nausea, and stomach pain.

Parts used:

Seeds and oil

Dosage:

For adults, 20–30 grams of flaxseed can be taken orally. Flaxseed can be consumed as a whole seed, ground into a powder, or taken as an oil supplement.It is commonly added to bread, muffins, and snack bars, or taken as a capsule

Flaxseed oil

Synergies:

★★★★

Flaxseed, Fenugreek, and Jamun

A combination of flaxseeds, fenugreek, and jamun, prepared in a 1:1:1 ratio, can be effective for patients with diabetes by lowering blood sugar.(185)

★★★★★

Flaxseeds and Sesame or Peanut

Mixing flaxseeds with sesame or peanut seeds, both high in unsaturated fats, can lower cholesterol, boost antioxidants, and protect the liver, potentially preventing heart disease and liver damage.(186)

★★★★

Flax, Sesame, and Pumpkin

A supplement containing milled flax, sesame, and pumpkin seeds in sour milk helps reduce inflammation, manage lipid levels, and improve overall health. It may positively impact triglyceride levels, body weight, and inflammatory markers for better well-being.(187)

Alpinia galanga

Galangal

A tall, slender plant crowned with white and red flowers and hosting long, blade-like leaves. The main attraction lies beneath the ground, in the branching rhizomes or roots.

Digestive Health and Anti-Inflammatory

Often called 'Thai Ginger' or 'Siamese Ginger', this pungent, piney root brings not only zesty flavors to the table but also a host of health benefits. Galangal's sharp taste and potent properties have earned it a well-deserved place in the world of herbs and spices.

Region:

Deeply rooted in the warm, tropical soils of Southeast Asia, Galangal is widely cultivated in countries like Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. This relative of ginger has since spread to other parts of the world, including Europe and the Americas.

Ancient Uses:

- Galangal has been traditionally used to support digestive health. It is believed to help to alleviate digestive issues such as indigestion, bloating, and flatulence. It is often used as a spice or brewed into tea to aid digestion.
- It has been used traditionally to help reduce inflammation and alleviate pain associated with conditions like arthritis and muscle strains. Poultices or topical preparations of galangal may be applied to affected areas.
- In some traditional medicinal systems, galangal has been used to support respiratory health. It is believed to have expectorant properties, aiding in the removal of mucus and congestion from the respiratory tract. It may be used to alleviate symptoms of coughs, colds, and respiratory infections.

Modern research:

- Galangal has potential antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-cancer, and other medicinal properties.(456)
- Galangal contains flavonoids, phenolics, saponins, alkaloids, and terpenoids - all of which play a significant role in protecting against UV rays, and is safe to use on the skin.(457)
- A 2020 study suggests that galangal may work as a chemotherapy adjunct to further increase the efficacy of chemotherapy.(458)

Parts used:

Rhizome or root

Fresh galangal root

Preparations:

- Fresh or dried Root: Used as a spice in cooking to add a unique flavor to dishes. Use according to taste in daily cooking or for making tea.
- Powdered: Ground Galangal can be used in cooking or to make a warming tea.
- Tincture or Extract: These concentrated forms are used for their wellness benefits. Use 5–20 ml daily.
- Capsules: Galangal is also available in capsule form for convenient use.

Dry and powder form

Synergies:

★★★★

Galangal, Rosemary, and Lemon ironbark

The combination of galangal, rosemary, and lemon ironbark extracts is antimicrobial in nature. This combination can be used in cooking or cleaning, or diluted essential oil mixture can be applied to skin.(459)

★★★★★

Galangal, Turmeric, and Lemongrass

The combination of 0.5% turmeric, 0.5% galangal powder, and 0.75% lemongrass essential oil demonstrates significant antimicrobial effects when used for food preservation purposes, inhibiting bacterial growth, maintaining firmness, and ensuring overall viability over a period of 12.(460)

Allium sativum

Garlic

Garlic is a perennial herb that grows from a bulb. Each bulb is made up of several cloves that are covered in white, papery skin. The cloves are used in traditional medicine and cooking.

Enhances Cardiovascular Health and Immune Function

Traditionally used to address heart disease and high blood pressure, garlic also boasts potent anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antimicrobial qualities. Found in the heart of diverse cuisines, garlic-infused dishes with its signature flavor and aromatic charm.

Region:

Garlic is native to Central Asia and northeastern Iran but is now widely cultivated in other regions such as Europe, Asia, and North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Ancient Greeks offered garlic bulbs to gods but avoided garlic breath in temples.
- Hippocrates used garlic as a diuretic, laxative, and remedy for parasites.
- Romans used garlic for culinary and medicinal purposes, treating fever and tuberculosis.
- In England, a blend of garlic, honey, and alcohol relieved colds, fever, and diarrhea.
- In France, garlic was credited with saving many during the 1720 plague outbreak.
- Garlic was used in the early 20th century to protect against cholera, diphtheria, and typhoid.
- Americans wore garlic necklaces during the 1917–1918 flu epidemic to prevent illness.
- Garlic has been used to improve circulation, prevent blood clots, and reduce blood pressure.
- Garlic traditionally stimulates the appetite and improves overall health.
- Garlic has historically served as an antimicrobial, preventing and treating colds and flu by killing bacteria and viruses.

Modern Research:

- Eating garlic provides anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anti-diabetes, and anticancer benefits when consumed regularly.(188)
- Garlic has strong potential to prevent and treat various heart and brain diseases.(189)
- It has anti-viral, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, antioxidant properties and may potentially treat Alzheimer's Disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, children's conditions, dermatologic applications, stress, infections, diabetes, drug toxicity, and osteoporosis.(190)
- It has beneficial effects on chronic diseases like hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidaemia, and liver diseases by modulating gut microbiota.(191)

Parts used:

Cloves

Dried garlic cloves

Preparations:

Garlic can be eaten fresh, cooked, or as a supplement, and it comes in creams, gels, pastes, and mouthwashes.

Dosage:

Daily doses range from 2 to 5 g of fresh raw garlic, 0.4 to 1.2 g of dried garlic powder, 2 to 5 mg of garlic oil, 300 to 1,000 mg of garlic extract (as solid material), and 2,400 mg per day of aged garlic extract (liquid).

Synergies:

★★★★★

Garlic and Honey

Combined honey and garlic extract is effective in addressing microbial resistance and improving wound healing for faster recovery.(192)

★★★★★

Garlic and Ginger

A combination of ginger and garlic extracts supports bone regeneration, tissue growth, and combined antioxidant effects. Add them to soups, salads, sauces, and curries, while cooking.(193)

★★★★★

Garlic and Lemon

Mixed garlic and lemon have shown great antimicrobial activity, therefore aiding in immunity. It can be used at home in cooking, salad dressings, infused water, and marinades for added flavor and potential health benefits.(194)

For maximum health benefits, especially cardiovascular effects, crush garlic and let it sit for 10-15 minutes before consuming it to allow the formation of allicin, its active compound.

Gentiana lutea

Gentian

Gentian is a perennial herb that grows up to 1 meter (3 feet) tall. It has long, lance-shaped leaves and large, trumpet-shaped flowers that are typically bright yellow. The roots of the plant are used in traditional medicine.

Digestive Aid and Appetite Stimulant

Gentian has been historically used in traditional medicine. It is used as a digestive tonic and to stimulate appetite, as well as to treat a variety of other ailments such as fever, worms, and jaundice. Gentian root has a bitter taste and is often used as a flavoring agent in alcoholic beverages and bitters.

Region:

Gentian is native to Europe but is now also found in North America and Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Named by Genthios of Illyria, Gentiana lutea's medicinal use dates back to ancient Egypt, with records before 100 BC.
- Dioscorides, Celsus, Galen, and Pliny praised gentian for treating various ailments in ancient times.
- In the 16th century, Leonhard Fuchs commended gentian root for relieving constipation and countering poison.
- Gentian stimulates appetite, relieves indigestion, and promotes bile flow.
- Gentian traditionally reduces fever and alleviates symptoms like chills and sweating.
- Gentian has traditional use in treating jaundice and liver disorders.
- Gentian is traditionally used to expel parasites from the body.

Modern Research:

- Decoctions of Gentian, long used by Siberian people for digestive disorders, can help to reduce symptoms associated with various gastrointestinal issues. (196)
- Data suggest that iridoids, seco-iridoids, and analog glycosides present in Gentian herb extract may promote kidney function. (197)
- Gentian root extract provides stomach protection by reducing acid production, preventing acute gastric ulcers, and shielding against injuries caused by stress and ethanol.(198)

Parts used:

Dried gentian root

Root

Preparations:

Gentian root can be consumed as a tea, taken orally as a supplement in capsule or tincture form, or used as a flavoring in alcoholic beverages and bitters.

Dosage:

For gentian root capsules, a standard dose is 500 mg taken 2-3 times daily with meals. Alternatively, use 1-4 grams of powdered gentian root as a digestive tonic. In extract form, take gentian bitters at doses of 5-30 drops (0.3-2 ml), or consume dissolved in alcohol with ¼ to ½ tsp before a meal. A 2% concentrated tincture can be used at approximately 40 ml daily or on alternate days.

Synergies:

★★★★

Gentian, Elderflower, Primrose, Yellow dock, and Vervain

Gentian root (12 mg) in combination with 36 mg each of elderflowers, primrose flower with calyx, yellow dock, and verbian herb, (Sinupret forte®) are shown to have beneficial effects on bronchitis, headache and sinus infections in human studies.(199)

Take gentian root 15-30 minutes before meals to stimulate appetite and digestive juices. Its bitter compounds can promote digestive function.

Zingiber officinale

Ginger

Ginger is a perennial herb that grows from a rhizome (underground stem). The rhizome is the part of the plant used in traditional medicine and cooking. It has a tan, gnarled exterior and a white, juicy interior. The rhizome is rich in essential oils and has a warm, pungent flavor and aroma.

Relieves Nausea and Reduces Inflammation

Ginger has historical use in traditional medicine and is known for its anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anti-nausea properties. It has been traditionally used to treat various ailments, such as motion sickness, morning sickness, and nausea. Ginger is also a popular ingredient in cooking and adds flavor to different dishes.

Region:

Ginger is native to tropical Asia but is now widely cultivated in Africa, South America, and the Caribbean.

Ancient Uses:

- Employed for 5000 years, ginger was valued for its medicinal and spiritual properties in Southeast Asia, India, and China.
- In the 14th century, ginger rivaled the cost of a sheep and was prized among spices.
- By the mid-16th century, Europe annually received 2000 tons of dried ginger from the East Indies, used in the Middle Ages to ward off the plague.
- In the 19th century, the British added ginger to beer, creating ginger ale.
- Ginger traditionally served as an anti-cancer agent and antioxidant, preventing cell damage.
- Used to lower high blood pressure and cholesterol, ginger reduces the risk of heart disease.
- Ginger relieved cold and flu symptoms, aiding digestion and stimulating appetite.
- Traditionally, ginger alleviates nausea and vomiting in motion sickness, pregnancy, and stomach issues.

Modern Research:

- Ginger has many different benefits, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-nausea, and anti-cancer properties.(200)
- It has a significant effect on liver cancer by suppressing tumor growth and inducing cell death. (201)
- Taking ginger supplements may help improve overall adult health by decreasing inflammation and damage caused by free radicals, thanks to its antioxidant properties.(202)
- Ginger supplements may help reduce insulin resistance, liver enzymes, and inflammation in people with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.(203)

Side Effects:

Ginger can cause heartburn, diarrhea, burping, and general stomach discomfort. Short-term topical use is potentially safe, but it may cause skin irritation for some.

Parts used:

Rhizome.

Ginger rhizome

Dosage:

Incorporate ginger into beverages or foods for flavor, or for therapeutic use, adults can take 0.5 to 3 grams daily for up to 12 weeks through teas, syrups, capsules, and liquid extracts, while topical forms like gels and essential oils are also available.

Synergies:

★★★★

Ginger and Turmeric

A combination of ginger and turmeric produces synergistic anti-inflammatory effects. It can enhance the results y in treating inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, and inflammatory bowel disease.(204)

★★★★★

Ginger and Honey

Ginger extract mixed with honey provides relief from dry coughs, a combination is widely used in cough syrups.(205)

★★★

Ginger and Licorice

Adding ginger to licorice further enhances its antitussic and expectorant, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory properties.(206)

★★★★

Ginger, Rosemary, Sumac, and Boswellia

The topical application of rosemary, ginger, sumac, and boswellia extracts shows great promise in treating muscle and joint pain.(207)

Ginkgo biloba

Ginkgo biloba

Ginkgo biloba is a large tree that can grow up to 50-60 feet tall. It has fan-shaped leaves and unique, two-lobed seeds. The leaves of the tree are used in traditional medicine.

Enhances Memory and Cognitive Function

Ginkgo biloba, a tree existing since pre-dinosaur times (245 to 66 million years ago), is famed for enhancing blood circulation, particularly to the brain and limbs. Historically valued for improving memory and cognitive clarity, it also addresses issues like asthma, tinnitus, and vertigo. Presently, available in supplement form, it is often promoted for cognitive enhancement.

Region:

Ginkgo biloba is native to China but is now found in other regions such as Japan, Korea, and the United States.

Ancient Uses:

- In Chinese medicine, people have been using Ginkgo for more than 500 years to help with heart problems.
- They used Ginkgo seeds to clear blockages in the body's energy pathways, which helped improve blood flow to different parts of the body.
- Ginkgo biloba has traditionally been used to alleviate asthma and tinnitus symptoms, improve circulation and cognitive function, including memory and concentration, and treat signs of cognitive decline, dementia, and vertigo.

Modern Research:

- Ginkgo biloba extract may prevent brain cell loss caused by trimethyltin, likely because it has antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties.(208)
- Ginkgo biloba may offer cardiovascular benefits by potentially inhibiting human thrombin, which could help prevent excessive blood clotting. (209)
- Ginkgo Biloba may help reduce infection risk by containing quercetin and other components that lower inflammation, regulating the immune system for better functionality.(210)
- Ginkgo biloba improves cognitive function and according to global clinical assessment is safe to use in Alzheimer's disease.(211)

Side Effects:

Avoid raw ginkgo parts, especially untreated seeds, due to potential seizure or fatality risks. Allergies to ginkgo can cause rashes or severe reactions. Those with bleeding disorders, diabetes, epilepsy, or fertility concerns should consult a doctor before using ginkgo.

Parts used:

Leaves

Ginkgo biloba fresh and dried leaves

Preparations:

Ginkgo Biloba can be consumed as a tea, taken orally as a supplement in capsule or tablet form, or applied topically as a cream or oil.

Dosage:

Take 40 mg of ginkgo biloba extract thrice daily for dementia. Higher doses of 120-240 mg daily to enhance cognitive function in healthy people.

Synergies:

★★★★

Green tea and Ginkgo biloba

Combining green tea and Ginkgo biloba extracts improves the skin's health and appearance. Topical application of cream containing these extracts provides moisturizing effects, promotes skin renewal, enhances elasticity, and strengthens the skin's protective barrier. (212)

★★★★

Ginkgo biloba and ginseng

Ginkgo biloba and ginseng are known for their potential to improve cognitive function. Combining them may provide positive results in supporting memory, focus, and overall mental clarity.(213)

Take ginkgo biloba extract in the morning to avoid potential interference with sleep due to its energizing effects.

Panax ginseng

Ginseng, Ren Shen

A slow-growing perennial plant with a dense cluster of green leaves and bright red berries. Beneath the soil lies its gnarled root, the core of Chinese traditional medicine for over 2,000 years.

Adaptogen and Cognitive Enhancer

Chinese Ginseng, the 'Root of Immortality', is a jewel in the crown of traditional medicine. This ancient root, with its peculiar human-like shape, is more than just a plant. It is a symbol of wellness, longevity, and a life force that bridges the gap between earth and man.

Region:

The heart of this legendary plant lies in the cool, shaded mountainous regions of northeastern China, Korea, and far eastern Siberia. Ren Shen, or Chinese ginseng, has grown here for centuries, flourishing under the protective canopy of the dense, deciduous forests.

Ancient Uses:

- Adaptogen and Energy Booster: Panax ginseng is classified as an adaptogenic herb in traditional medicine. It is believed to help the body adapt to stress and promote overall well-being. It is often used to support energy levels, enhance stamina, and combat fatigue.
- Cognitive Function and Mental Performance: It is believed to improve concentration, memory, and overall mental clarity. It is often used to enhance focus and mental alertness.
- Immune System Support: Panax ginseng is believed to help strengthen the immune system and improve resistance against infections and diseases. It is often used to support overall immune health.
- Male Reproductive Health: It is believed to have aphrodisiac properties and is used to enhance libido, improve erectile function, and address male infertility.

Modern research:

- A study indicated that ginseng extract may improve blood lipid profile, primarily by reducing total and LDL-cholesterol levels. (461)
- Ginseng has been shown to enhance sexual function and quality of life of women by alleviating menopause-related symptoms. It is a powerful plant that can be used as an alternative to conventional treatments to maintain the health of menopausal women.(462)
- Numerous clinical trials have demonstrated that taking ginseng in various dosages can be an effective and safe prophylactic measure against the common cold and flu.(463)

Parts used:

The root, both fresh and dried (known as 'white' and 'red' ginseng respectively)

Preparations:

- Raw or Cooked: It can be chewed or used in cooking for its unique, slightly sweet flavor. A small piece of the root can be consumed daily.
- Tea: The root can be steeped to make a warming, invigorating tea. A small piece of the root can be consumed daily.
- Powder: Ground into a powder, ginseng can be mixed with food or drinks. Use as per your healthcare provider's advice.
- Extract and Capsules: These offer a concentrated dose for convenient use. Use as per your healthcare provider's advice.

Fresh, dried, and sliced ginseng root

Synergies:

★★★★

Ginseng and Garlic

Extract from sun-dried black ginseng and aged garlic shows remarkable anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, lipid-lowering, and liver-protective effects for effective treatment of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.(464)

★★★

Ginseng and Cinnamon

An in vitro study found that the combination of ginseng and cinnamon extracts has the ability to inhibit the growth of various cancer cells, supporting the combined use of ginseng and cinnamon in the context of anticancer effects.(465)

Lycium barbarum

Goji Berry

Immune Boost and Eye Health

A dense, vine-like shrub adorned with delicate purple flowers, which, come summertime, transform into vibrant, orange-red berries.

Goji Berry, the 'red diamond' of the East. For centuries, these tiny, bright berries have been cherished in traditional Chinese medicine and cuisine. Today, they hold a revered spot in the global superfood lineup.

Region:

Originally hailing from the fertile soils of China, Mongolia, and the Tibetan Himalayas, the Goji Berry, or Chinese Wolfberry, has since found popularity across the globe for its nutritional bounty and purported health benefits.

Ancient Uses:

- Immune System Support: They are believed to strengthen the body's defenses and enhance overall immune function, helping to protect against infections and diseases.
- Eye Health: Goji berries have a strong association with promoting eye health in traditional practices. They are believed to nourish and tonify the liver and kidneys, which are considered important in traditional Chinese medicine for maintaining healthy vision. Goji berries are often used to support eye health and improve visual acuity.
- Anti-Aging and Longevity: They are believed to nourish the body and promote vitality and longevity. Goji berries are often included in herbal formulations for promoting overall health and well-being.
- Blood and Liver Health: They are believed to nourish the blood, improve circulation, and enhance liver function. Goji berries are often included in herbal formulas for conditions related to blood deficiency and liver imbalances.

Modern research:

- Goji berry extracts could be used as prebiotic additives in food or nutraceuticals, to encourage healthy gut bacteria and flora. (466)
- Research into the antiproliferative effects of red and black goji berry extracts on triple-negative MDA-MB-231 cells show potential in treating triple-negative breast cancer. (467)
- The purified components of the goji berry appear to be promising as strengthening agents in the treatment of diabetes and its associated illnesses.(468)

Parts used:

Fruits, leaves, and root bark

Preparations:

- Raw or Dried: Eaten as a snack, or used in cooking and baking. Use according to personal taste and dietary needs.
- Juice: Extracted to create a refreshing, nutrient-packed drink.
- Tea: Steeped in hot water to create a healthful infusion. One cup of goji tea can be consumed 1-2 times per day.
- Powder and Capsules: For a concentrated, convenient dose of goji nutrients. Use as per the healthcare provider's advice.

Fresh and dried goji berries

Synergies:

★★★

Goji berry and Chrysanthemum

A mix of Chrysanthemum flower and goji berry extracts in a 1:1 ratio shows antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. It reduces inflammation in cells and inhibits the production of inflammatory molecules.(469)

★★★★

Goji berry and Grape seed

A study found that the combination of goji berry and grape seed improves the function of the immune system. They demonstrated that this mixture restored white blood cell counts and boosted B cell proliferation.(470)

Hydrastatis canadensis

Goldenseal

Goldenseal has a yellowish root with a rhizome (horizontal stem) used medicinally. The plant grows up to 19 ½ inches (50 cm) tall and produces small white flowers in the spring, followed by red raspberry-like fruits in the summer.

Supports Digestive Health and Immune Function

Goldenseal, a time-honored remedy embraced by Native American medicine and later adopted by European settlers, finds its place in oral applications. It addressed digestive issues and respiratory infections with its potent antimicrobial properties, and in topical use to soothe skin irritations and combat infections.

Region:

Goldenseal is native to the eastern United States, particularly in the Appalachian Mountains and the Great Lakes.

Ancient Uses:

- Goldenseal was valued as a Goldenseal was valued as a remedy by various Indian tribes. The Cherokees combined its root powder with bear grease for uses like diuretics, insect repellents, stimulants, and treatments for inflamed eyes. Meanwhile, the Catawbas boiled its roots to address jaundice, stomach ulcers, and sore mouths.
- Since the 1830s, Eclectics favored goldenseal, often employing it for breast cancers and swellings.
- Goldenseal has traditionally been used to address digestive issues like diarrhea, indigestion, and stomach ulcers, and may act as a mild laxative.
- It's also been used to combat respiratory and urinary tract infections, potentially due to the berberine compound preventing bacterial adhesion.
- Topically, goldenseal treats skin conditions like eczema and inflammation and can be used for eye infections, canker sores, and sore throats when applied as a mouthwash.

Modern research:

- Goldenseal is a highly potent plant with anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, and other beneficial bioactive components that can help remove toxins from the body.(214)
- It has medicinal properties for treating gastritis, colitis, duodenal ulcers, appetite loss, liver disease, bile secretion disorders, snakebites, and vaginitis.(215)
- Goldenseal extract has antidepressant effects.(216)

Side effects:

Using goldenseal while pregnant or breastfeeding may pose risks to the baby due to a harmful substance that can pass through the placenta and into breast milk, potentially causing brain damage in exposed newborns.

Parts used:

Rhizome and roots

Preparations:

Can be consumed orally as a capsule, extract, tea, or tincture. It can also be applied topically as an ointment or poultice. Goldenseal is an endangered plant and is protected by law in some states. Purchase sustainably grown or cultivated goldenseal to help protect wild populations.

Dosage:

Include 0.5 to 1 g dried rhizomes 3 times daily, and 0.3 to 1 mL 1:1 liquid extract in 60% ethanol 3 times daily. For influenza, take 10 to 30 drops of the extract 2 to 4 times a day.

Dried goldenseal root

Synergies:

★★★★

Goldenseal and Echinacea

Goldenseal may be combined with echinacea, another immune-boosting herb, to enhance immune system functionality, especially during cold and flu seasons.(217)

★★★

Goldenseal and Garlic

Garlic is also known for its antimicrobial and immune-boosting properties. Combining goldenseal and garlic may provide comprehensive support against infections.(218)

★★★

Goldenseal and Astragalus

The combination of goldenseal and astragalus extracts shows immunity-stimulating properties. (219)

Centella asiatica

Gotu Kola

Gotu kola is a perennial plant that belongs to the parsley family. It has fan-shaped leaves and small, pinkish-red flowers. It prefers to grow in swampy areas.

Cognitive Support and Skin Health

Gotu kola, not to be confused with the kola nut, is a staple herb in Ayurvedic and traditional Chinese medicine. Known for its rejuvenating and neuroprotective properties, Gotu Kola has been used to promote relaxation, improve memory, and accelerate wound healing.

Region:

Gotu kola is native to the wetlands of Asia and can be found in countries such as India, Sri Lanka, China, and Indonesia. It also grows in the South Pacific, South Africa, and the southeastern United States.

Ancient Uses:

- Gotu kola is believed to have neuroprotective properties and may help improve memory, concentration, and overall cognitive performance. It is often used as a brain tonic and to support mental clarity.
- Known for its potential benefits in promoting skin health and wound healing, it's believed to stimulate the production of collagen, enhance skin elasticity, and improve the appearance of scars and stretch marks. It is often used topically or consumed orally for skin-related concerns.
- Gotu kola has been traditionally used to support circulation and venous health. It is believed to strengthen blood vessels, improve blood flow, and reduce swelling. It is often used to alleviate symptoms of venous insufficiency, such as varicose veins and leg ulcers.
- Stress Relief and Relaxation: Gotu kola is considered an adaptogenic herb, known for its potential to help the body adapt to stress and promote relaxation. It is believed to have calming properties and may help reduce anxiety and stress-related symptoms. It is often used as a nerve tonic and to support overall well-being.

Modern research:

- A 2021 study concludes that using gotu kola extract lotion effectively reduces skin pigmentation and stretch mark lines, improves skin moisture, and enhances skin texture.(471)
- Study results indicate that the seed extract of Gotu kola exhibits potential immune-stimulatory effects for the treatment of immune disorders.(472)
- Another study implies that gotu kola leaves possess antioxidant properties.(473)

Parts used:

The whole plant, especially the leaves

Preparations:

Gotu Kola can be consumed as a tea or juice, used topically as a poultice, or taken as a dietary supplement in capsule or tablet form. For general wellness, 1-2 grams of dried herb steeped as tea or 60-180 mg of standardized extract per day is often recommended. It can also be eaten raw in salads, cooked as a green, or used in tinctures.

Fresh gotu kola

Dried and powdered gotu kola

Synergies:

★★★★

Gotu kola and Sappan wood

The combination of sappan wood and gotu kola extracts was found to be effective in reducing blood sugar in animal models.(474)

Vitis vinifera

Grapes

The grape plant is a woody, perennial vine with distinctive lobed leaves and small, light green flowers. Its fruits, known as grapes, grow in clusters and vary in color from green to black, depending on the variety.

Beneficial for Heart Health, Rich in Antioxidants

Grapes have been cherished not just for their delightful taste but also for their health benefits. Packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, grapes play a significant role in traditional remedies. The fruit, skin, leaves, and seeds are all used for their medicinal properties.

Region:

Grapes are native to southern Europe and western Asia. This region's climate and soil conditions are ideal for grape cultivation, contributing to the plant's rich chemical makeup.

Ancient Uses:

- Historically, grapes have been used in various cultures for their health-promoting properties. In ancient Egypt, grapes were depicted in tomb paintings and used for their healing abilities. Roman and Greek civilizations used grapes in wines, which were then thought to have healing powers.

Modern research:

- Concord grape juice supplementation can enhance neurocognitive function in older adults with mild memory decline, indicating that it can help prevent age related cognitive decline.(620)
- A grape-enriched diet increases bone calcium retention and cortical bone properties in animal models, therefore preventing issues such as osteoarthritis from occurring in old age.(621)
- Grapes reduce risk factors associated with cardiovascular health, cancer, neurodegenerative disease, and age-related cognitive decline. (622)
- Grapes have cardiovascular benefits, cancer chemopreventive activity, and skin cancer prevention capabilities. Preliminary data suggests benefits for people suffering from Alzheimer's disease and urinary bladder dysfunction.(623)

Side Effects:

While grapes are generally safe, excessive consumption can lead to digestive issues like diarrhea. Grape seeds and skins may cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. The high sugar content in grapes might not be suitable for diabetics when consumed in large quantities.

Parts used:

The entire grape plant is beneficial - the fruits are eaten fresh or dried (as raisins), skins and seeds are used in extracts, and leaves can be used for tea or culinary purposes.

Fresh grapes

Dosage:

For grape seed extract, a common dosage is between 100-300 mg per day. However, the optimal dose can vary based on the specific health condition being addressed. Fresh grapes can be consumed daily as part of a balanced diet.

Synergies:

★★★★

Grapes and Onion

Black grapes, abundant in the polyphenol antioxidant catechin, contribute to preventing cardiovascular disease, cancer, and neurological disorders; when combined with onions, they can inhibit blood clots and promote cardiovascular health.(624)

★★★

Grapes and Chinese skullcap

A combination of grapes and Chinese skullcap can potentially enhance their antioxidant efficacy, allowing lower dosages of each drug to be used.(625)

Camellia sinensis

Green Tea

Green tea is an evergreen shrub or small tree with glossy, dark green leaves and white or pink flowers.

Promotes Heart Health and Mental Alertness

Green tea is a popular beverage consumed for centuries in Asia and has gained popularity worldwide for its potential health benefits. It is made by steaming and drying green tea leaves, which helps preserve its antioxidant properties. Green tea is rich in catechins, a type of antioxidant linked to various health benefits, including improving heart health and aiding in weight loss.

Region:

Green tea is native to China but is now cultivated and consumed worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Green tea, discovered around 2737 B.C. by Emperor Shennong, originated when he accidentally drank water with a boiled tea leaf, creating a new beverage.
- Han Dynasty documents (206 BC to 220 AD) show green tea cultivation used for ointments and occasionally chewed for toothaches.
- During the Tang Dynasty (618 AD to 907 AD), it was considered for inflammation and internal "heat" reduction.
- Green tea's caffeine and high antioxidant content has been historically used as a natural stimulant to lower blood pressure and improve cholesterol levels.

Modern research:

- Green tea leaves have antibacterial and antifungal properties, serving as an alternative to traditional medicines with fewer side effects on human skin.(220)
- Green tea products have antiseptic, anti-plaque, and anti-inflammatory properties, and could be used in mouthwashes. (221)
- Green tea has a high potential for speeding up wound healing. (222)
- Drinking 3 cups of green tea per day for 60 days leads to significant weight loss, reduced BMI, and decreased waist circumference in elderly people with metabolic syndrome.(223)

Side Effects:

Green tea overdose can cause headaches due to high caffeine content. High doses of green tea extract may produce excess chemicals linked to liver injury.

Parts used:

Leaves

Green tea infusion

Preparations:

Tea: Steep green tea leaves in boiled water for 5 to 10 minutes.

Dosage:

A cup of green tea contains 178-823 mg of catechins, known for their antioxidant properties. FDA-approved ointment, green tea powder or extracts are commonly taken as supplements.

Synergies:

★★★★
Green tea and Ginkgo biloba

Combining green tea and Ginkgo biloba extracts enhances skin health, promoting moisture, renewal, elasticity, and the skin's protective barrier in topical cream application.(224)

★★★★★
Green tea and Cinnamon

Combining cinnamon with green tea may support metabolic health and weight management.(225)

★★★★★
Green tea and Turmeric

Green tea and turmeric show anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties when combined, protecting against oxidative stress and inflammation.(226)

★★★
Green tea and Reishi mushroom

A green tea and reishi mushroom extract combination slows down the tumor growth and the spread of breast cancer cells.(227)

★★★
Green tea and Witch hazel

Green tea and witch-hazel extracts produce antimicrobial effects against skin infection-causing bacteria.(228)

Add lemon juice to green tea. Its citric acid boosts the body's absorption of EGCG by over 1000%, enhancing its anti-inflammatory, weight management, and heart health benefits.

Crataegus spp.

Hawthorn

Hawthorn is a deciduous shrub or small tree that grows up to 6 meters (20 feet) tall. It has thorny branches, white or pink flowers, and red or orange berries.

Enhances Cardiovascular Health and Reduces Anxiety

In the early 1800s, American doctors turned to hawthorn to address circulatory and respiratory ailments. Traditional medicine harnessed the power of hawthorn berries, utilizing them to address a range of heart-related conditions, such as irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, chest pain, arterial hardening, and heart failure.

Region:

Hawthorn is native to Europe, Asia, and North America. It is widely cultivated in many temperate regions around the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Chinese, Europeans, and Native Americans have used Hawthorn as a heart tonic for years.
- In ancient Chinese medicine, hawthorn fruit improved circulation, digestion, and addressed high blood cholesterol and pressure.
- European herbal medicine used hawthorn flowers, fruit, and leaves as an astringent and for muscle spasms.
- Ancient Greeks and Romans used hawthorn in childbirth and weddings, associating it with Cardea and considering it a home symbol.
- In Rome's first century, hawthorn was a love and marriage symbol, also tied to Christian tradition and Arabic funeral pyres.
- Hawthorn has been used to anxiety and stress.
- It has been known to support heart and circulatory health, protect against heart disease, and regulate blood pressure and cholesterol.

Modern research:

- Hawthorn may represent a safe, effective, and nontoxic treatment for cardiovascular and ischemic heart disease.(229)
- Hawthorn fruits are abundant source of antioxidants and anti-cancer phenolic compounds, which help protect the body against free radical and other forms of damage.(230)
- Standardized extracts from hawthorn leaves and flowers show potential in treating mild chronic heart failure and other cardiovascular disorders.(231)

Side Effects:

Hawthorn is generally safe as directed, but may cause dizziness, nausea, and gastrointestinal discomfort. It can lower blood pressure, which, combined with certain medications for male sexual dysfunction, may further reduce blood pressure levels.

Dried hawthorn leaves and berries

Parts used:

Flowers, fruits, and leaves

Preparations:

Hawthorn is typically taken as a supplement in capsule or tincture form. It can also be prepared as tea by steeping the leaves, flowers, or berries in hot water.

Dosage:

Adults can consume hawthorn in doses of 160–1200 mg daily.

Synergies:

★★★

Hawthorn and Mango

A citrus tincture of hawthorn berries and mango extract reduces lipid buildup and restores antioxidants in animal models.(232)

★★★

Hawthorn and Red sage

Hawthorn and red sage extract demonstrate a synergistic effect in reducing hyperlipidemia and oxidative stress when combined.(233)

★★★

Hawthorn, Bur-marigold, and Calendula

An antiallergic herbal made using bur-marigold, calendula, and hawthorn extracts in a 1:5:5 ratio shows significantly greater antioxidant activity compared to the individual herbs.(234)

Cannabis sativa

Hemp Seeds

Hemp seeds are small and brown seeds from the Cannabis sativa plant. They are rich in protein, fiber, and healthy fatty acids including omega-3s and omega-6s. They have a mild, nutty flavor and are often referred to as hemp hearts.

Supports Heart Health and Reduces Inflammation

Revered in ancient civilizations for their medicinal properties, hemp seeds were a staple in traditional diets due to their high nutritional value. They were particularly valued for their ability to improve heart health and reduce inflammation. Historical texts from various cultures, including ancient China and Native American tribes, highlight the use of hemp seeds in their healing practices.

Region:

Originally native to Central Asia, hemp cultivation has spread across the globe, with notable growth in Europe, Canada, and the United States.

Ancient Uses:

- Heart Helper: Ancient practitioners often recommended hemp seeds for heart health, appreciating their ability to improve blood circulation and lower bad cholesterol levels.
- Inflammation Fighter: The seeds were commonly used to reduce inflammation in conditions like arthritis, with records of their use dating back to ancient Chinese medicinal texts.
- Digestive Aid: Due to their high fiber content, hemp seeds were valued for promoting digestive health and preventing constipation.
- Energy Booster: Their high protein content made hemp seeds a favored choice for sustaining energy levels throughout the day.

Modern research:

- Hemp seed oil is beneficial for cardiovascular health, skin, hormonal balance, and diabetes. It also has a unique 3:1 fatty acid ratio, which is great nourishment for vegetarian diets. It improves immunity and cardiovascular health and is beneficial for hair, nails, and skin tissues.(652)
- Hemp seed oil contains antioxidant compounds like phenols and polyphenols, which can counteract oxidative stress-related diseases.(653)
- Hemp seeds are high in proteins, lipids, polyunsaturated fatty acids, insoluble fiber, and carbs and have high nutritional value in general, helping with anxiety and oxidative stress and may reduce the risk of chronic illnesses.(654)

Side Effects:

Hemp seeds are generally safe, but consuming them in large quantities can lead to gastrointestinal discomfort due to their high fiber content. People with a sensitivity to THC should also exercise caution, as trace amounts can be present.

Parts used:

The seed of the hemp plant

Preparations:

Hemp seeds can be consumed raw, cooked, or roasted. They can be sprinkled over salads, blended into smoothies, or added to baked goods. Hemp seed oil is also popular, used both in cooking and as a dietary supplement.

Dosage:

- Oral: A typical serving size is 2-3 tablespoons (30-45 grams) of hemp seeds daily. They can be added to meals or taken as a supplement in capsule form.
- Topical: Hemp seed oil can be applied directly to the skin for its moisturizing and soothing properties. It is also a common ingredient in skin care products.

Hemp seeds

Synergies:

★★★

Hemp seeds, Sugar, and Black pepper

A mixture of 7.5 gm dried hemp seeds, sugar, and black pepper helps treat diarrhea.(655)

Ocimum tenuiflorum

Holy basil

Holy basil is an annual herb with green, hairy leaves and small, purple flowers. It grows to about 24-36 inches (60-90 cm).

Stress Relief and Respiratory Health

Respected as a sacred plant in Hinduism, it graces temples and homes. Holy basil has earned the title of an "elixir of life," its presence held in deep reverence and praised for its adaptogenic properties as a revitalizing tonic. In the West, it is revered as "holy" basil, esteemed for its purity across various cultures.

Region:

Holy basil is native to the Indian subcontinent but is now widely cultivated in other tropical and subtropical regions.

Ancient uses:

- Tulsi, celebrated as the "Queen of Herbs" in the Vedic Bhagavata Purana, holds significance as a symbol of prosperity and the goddess Lakshmi, bridging earthly and heavenly realms in Hindu mythology.
- In folk medicine, Tulsi has been traditionally utilized for promoting eye and heart health, immunity, kidney function, oral hygiene, and respiratory health through homemade methods like extracts, powders, and teas.
- Recognized for its detoxification properties, Tulsi aids in healthy digestion and elimination, exhibits a fever-reducing effect, and supports the body in managing mental, metabolic, and physical stress, believed to have a calming impact.

Modern research:

- Tulsi or holy basil leaves and stems have more than 60 chemical compounds, including phenolics, flavonoids, phenylpropanoids, terpenoids, fatty acid derivatives, essential oil, fixed oil, and steroids, which show anticancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antistress, gamma-irradiation protection, antidiabetic, and antileishmanicidal activities.(235)
- High calcium content in holy basil leaves might assist in lowering the chance of certain cancers.(236)
- Holy basil leaf extracts could be a promising treatment for diabetes mellitus and its accompanying symptoms.(237)

Side Effects:

Tulsi leaves should not be chewed, as the significant amount of mercury and iron they contain will be released upon chewing, which may wear off enamel from teeth and discolor them.

Parts used:

Leaves and seeds

Preparations:

Tea: Simply boil and simmer a handful of leaves for about 10 minutes. To enhance the flavor, you can add honey or lime.

Dosage:

Take 500 mg of holy basil extract daily in warm water for 1.5 to 3 months, avoiding milk for at least half an hour. Drink a cup of tulsi tea 1-2 times daily, and for oral hygiene, use a 4% holy basil leaf extract as a mouthwash twice daily for 30 days.

Dried holy basil

Synergies:

★★★★

Holy basil, Caraway, Clove, Cumin, and Marjoram

Combining holy basil, caraway, clove, cumin, and marjoram essential oils has a positive effect against fungal infections when applied topically.(238)

★★★

Holy basil, Anise, and Fennel

Mixing holy basil, anise, and fennel oils with methyl-paraben strongly inhibits foodborne disease-causing microorganisms.(239)

★★★★

Holy basil, Amla, Punarnava, and Arjuna

A tonic containing holy basil, amla, punarnava, and arjuna tree bark extracts significantly lowers blood lipid levels and supports aorta health, suggesting potential anti-atherogenic benefits.(240)

Humulus lupulus

Hops

A twining, perennial plant that climbs upwards of 15 to 20 feet, decorated with fragrant, cone-shaped flowers, is a prized ingredient in beer brewing and traditional herbal medicine.

Promotes Sleep and Eases Anxiety

Hops, commonly linked with beer, provide more than just bitterness to your drink. It contains natural compounds with various wellness benefits. Hops are rich in xanthohumol, a compound studied for its potential antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

Region:

Originally native to Europe, western Asia, and North America, hops have since been cultivated in many temperate regions across the globe, with a particular concentration in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States.

Ancient Uses:

- Hops were historically used as a natural sedative to promote relaxation and improve sleep quality. Ancient civilizations would place dried hop flowers or hop pillows near their beds to induce sleepiness and alleviate insomnia.
- Traditional herbal medicine used hops to aid digestion and relieve digestive discomfort. It was believed to have carminative properties, helping to ease bloating, gas, and stomach cramps.
- Hops were used as a calming agent for anxiety and nervousness. Ancient healers believed that the sedative compounds in hops could help soothe the mind, reduce restlessness, and promote a sense of calm.

Modern research:

- Daily supplementation with a hops extract significantly improves depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms in healthy young adults over a 4-week period.(475)
- Hops extracts and flavonoids show antimicrobial properties against various human and plant pathogens.(476)
- Hops contain a wide range of health-promoting compounds, including antioxidants, anti-inflammatory properties, and potential antibacterial and antifungal effects.(477)

Parts used:

The female flowers, or "cones," are the most used part of the hops plant, valued for their unique aroma and their rich concentration of beneficial compounds.

Preparations:

- Tea: Hops can be steeped into a calming herbal tea. One cup of Hops tea can be consumed 1-2 times per day.
- Tincture and Extracts: These concentrated forms provide a potent dose of the beneficial compounds found in hops.
- Capsules: Hops is also available in capsule form for those who prefer a convenient, no-fuss approach.

Hop's long twining stem

Fresh and dried cones

Synergies:

★★★

Hops and Valerian

A single dose of valerian and hops fluid extract effectively improves sleep quantity and quality in poor sleepers.(478)

Marrubium vulgare

Horehound

This perennial herb, part of the mint family, features square stems, dark green leaves, and small white flowers in dense clusters.

Respiratory and Digestive Relief

Horehound has been a staple in herbal medicine for centuries, valued for its effectiveness in treating respiratory and digestive ailments. Its widespread use across continents highlights its enduring popularity.

Region:

Originally from Europe and Asia, horehound has spread to various regions worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- In ancient Egypt, horehound was a go-to remedy for fever, colds, and bronchial issues.
- The Greeks and Romans often used it to relieve stomach aches, indigestion, and vomiting.
- During the Middle Ages, it was employed to treat a range of conditions including jaundice, bladder stones, digestive problems, and skin issues like boils and wounds.

Modern research:

- Horehound is used in herbal medicine for treatment of liver diseases, biliary tract disorders, and increasing the appetite and supporting the function of the stomach.(601)
- Black horehound has beneficial biological effects due to its phenylpropanoid glycoside content, which has neurosedative, antioxidant, and antimicrobial properties.
- Black horehound can be used as an anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antiprotozoal, antifungal drug, and has been reported as a potential cancer drug.(602)
- White horehound is used for digestion problems including diabetes, loss of appetite, indigestion, bloating, gas, diarrhea, constipation, and liver and gallbladder complaints. It is also used for lung and breathing problems including cough, whooping cough, asthma, tuberculosis, bronchitis, and swollen breathing passages. (603)

Side Effects:

While Horehound is generally considered safe, some individuals might experience mild digestive upset. It's important to use it cautiously, especially if you have existing health conditions.

Parts used:

Leaves and flowers

Close up of fresh horehound leaves

Dosage:

- Horehound can be consumed as a tea, with 1-2 teaspoons of dried herb steeped in boiling water. It's also available in lozenge and syrup form, especially for cough relief, with dosages following the manufacturer's recommendations.

Synergies:

★★★★★

Horehound and Meadowsweet, Chamomile, or Ginger

Black horehound is rarely used alone and is frequently combined with meadowsweet, chamomile, or ginger for relief of nausea.(604)

Aesculus hippocastanum

Horse Chestnut

Enhances Circulation and Reduces Inflammation

Horse chestnut is a large deciduous tree that can grow up to 36 meters in height. It is known for its palmate leaves and its large, glossy brown seeds contained in a green, spiky capsule.

Horse chestnut is known for its beautiful, towering appearance and its large, distinctive seeds. It has been used in traditional medicine, particularly in Europe, for its various therapeutic properties.

Region:

Horse chestnut is native to the Balkan peninsula, but it is now cultivated in temperate regions worldwide, particularly in parks and gardens in Europe and North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Horse chestnut seeds and bark have been traditionally used to support healthy circulation. It was believed to strengthen the walls of blood vessels and promote proper blood flow, making it a popular remedy for conditions like varicose veins, hemorrhoids, and leg swelling.
- Traditional medicine utilized horse chestnut as an anti-inflammatory agent. It was applied topically in the form of creams or ointments to soothe skin inflammation, including conditions like eczema and dermatitis.
- Horse chestnut was traditionally used to address venous insufficiency, a condition characterized by poor blood flow from the legs back to the heart. It was believed to help reduce swelling, pain, and the sensation of heaviness in the legs associated with this condition.

Modern research:

- Horse chestnut enhances the body's antioxidative defense system and prevents liver damage in animal models.(479)
- Horse chestnut extract has anti-edema, anti-inflammatory, and venotonizing properties, making it a potential treatment for chronic vein disease, hemorrhoidal disease, and post-traumatic edema.(480)
- Horse chestnut seed extract effectively reduces lower leg edema and alleviates leg pain, heaviness, and itching in patients with mild to moderate venous insufficiency.(481)

Parts used:

The seeds are widely used, but leaves, bark, and flowers of Horse Chestnut are toxic if consumed directly.

Raw seeds

Preparations:

Horse chestnut can be made into a standardized extract, taken orally, or used topically. It is also often used in creams, lotions, and ointments for topical application. A standardized seed extract might contain 20% aescin and be taken at a dose of 100–150 mg twice a day.

Closeup of the bark, leaves, and fruit

Armoracia rusticana

Horseradish

Horseradish is a perennial herb that grows up to 1.5 meters (5 feet) tall. It has large green leaves and small white flowers. The root of the plant is used for medicinal purposes.

Digestive Stimulant and Respiratory Aid

Known for its bold and fiery flavor, horseradish has been embraced as a remedy for an array of ailments. From respiratory conditions to digestive issues and pain relief, this potent herb is popular in traditional medicine. Mustard oils, flavonoids, and sinigrin stand as the active ingredients, contributing to its therapeutic potential.

Region:

Horseradish is native to southeastern Europe and western Asia and is now widely cultivated in Europe, Asia, and North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Horseradish for medicinal purposes can be traced back to 1500 BC in Egypt
- Ancient Greeks used it for lower back pain and menstrual cramps, associating it with aphrodisiac properties.
- Its consumption spread during The Renaissance, becoming a common condiment in Britain by the late 1600s.
- Introduced to North America during colonial times, it holds significance in Jewish Passover traditions, often paired with gefilte fish.
- Horseradish served digestive, topical pain relief, and respiratory roles, addressing conditions like coughs and bronchitis.
- It stimulates digestion, relieves muscle and joint pain topically, and was once used as a cough medicine for various ailments.

Modern research:

- Horseradish leaves possess certain inhibitory properties, and can be an alternative therapy for wound healing, certain fungal infections, and bacterial infections, as well as a good source of nutrient supplements. (242)
- Horseradish roots are widely used as a cooking spice and flavoring agent due to their richness in phytochemicals.(243)

Side Effects:

Horseradish root is safe for culinary and medicinal use up to 12 weeks, but the mustard oil content may irritate the mouth and stomach. Excessive ingestion can lead to symptoms like diarrhea, stomach discomfort, and vomiting with blood. Preparations with 2% or less mustard oil are safe, while higher doses may cause allergies and skin irritations.

Parts used:

Root and leaves

Preparations:

Horseradish is typically consumed as a condiment or used as a natural remedy in the form of a tincture or capsule. It can also be prepared as tea by steeping grated horseradish root in hot water.

Dosage:

Take 3-4 grams of fresh root daily before meals, or consume up to 20 grams of dried root per day.

Ingest 2-gram doses of the infusion or syrup multiple times a day, or prepare a tincture and take 2-4 grams of the dried equivalent daily.

Horseradish roots and leaves

Synergies:

★★★

Horseradish and Nasturtium

The combination horseradish root and nasturtium effectively treats uncomplicated, acute rhinosinusitis.(244)

★★★

Horseradish and Nasturtium

Nasturtium and horseradish root produce strong antimicrobial activity against oral pathogens, suggesting potential as an alternative to antibiotics for treating oropharyngeal infections and periodontitis.(245)

Hyssopus officinalis

Hyssop

Respiratory and Digestive Relief

Hyssop is a perennial herb that grows up to 60 cm (24 inches) tall. It has narrow, green leaves and small blue or purple flowers.

Hyssop is a popular herb in traditional medicine. It has been used since ancient civilizations such as Greece, Rome, and the Middle East. It has been used to treat various ailments, including respiratory and digestive issues and skin conditions. The active ingredients in hyssop include flavonoids, tannins, and volatile oils.

Region:

Hyssop is native to the Mediterranean region and is widely cultivated in Europe and North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Romans used hyssop for plague protection and in herbal wine.
- Ancient Greek physicians, Galen and Hippocrates, valued hyssop for chest inflammation.
- It was historically used in the Middle Ages for stews and as a holy herb for cleaning temples.
- It was sed by Hebrews for temple cleaning and insect repelling.
- In the 17th-18th centuries, hyssop was used to treat dropsy and jaundice.
- John Gerard brought hyssop to England in 1597, making it popular in knot gardens.
- It was used for bloating and indigestion, and believed to have carminative properties.
- Hyssop was used for bronchitis, colds, and coughs, and believed to have expectorant properties.

Modern research:

- Hyssop can help reduce inflammation by interfering with the processes that cause it. This makes it a potential natural remedy for a variety of inflammatory conditions, such as allergies, asthma, and arthritis.(246)
- Hyssop extract has pain-relieving effects that are caused by its interaction with opioid receptors in the body, which play an important role in pain perception.(247)

Side Effects:

High doses (10-30 drops for adults) of hyssop can cause convulsions due to a substance called pinocamphone, making it unsuitable for pregnant or breastfeeding women. People sensitive to hyssop may experience digestive issues like diarrhea, nausea, and upset stomach. Overdosing may result in symptoms such as central nervous system disturbances, dizziness, and chest tightness.

Parts used:

Leaves, stems, and flowers.

Preparations:

- Tender leaves of hyssop are cut regularly for salads, soups, or teas. Use it sparingly with fatty meats for digestion.
- For medicinal use, gather flowering tops on a sunny day after the dew dries. Dry the branches in a warm, well-ventilated room. Store leaves and flowers in sealed, dark glass containers.
- Use hyssop, basil, thyme, and lavender essential oils in a diffuser for aromatherapy benefits.(248)

Dosage:

- You can use dried hyssop leaves for garnish or cooking, adding a minty-floral flavor to dishes.
- You can sprinkle them on salads, soups, or roasts, or cook or steam hyssop as you like.
- Hyssop essential oil is used in aromatherapy and applied topically; avoid using hyssop essential oil orally.

Dried hyssop leaves and flowers

Santalum album

Indian Sandalwood

A small evergreen tree, Indian sandalwood is highly valued for its fragrant wood. It holds a sacred status in Hinduism and is a traditional source of sandalwood oil.

Calming and Antiseptic, Aids in Relaxation and Anxiety Relief

Santalum album, commonly known as Indian sandalwood, is deeply rooted in Ayurvedic medicine, known for its unique fragrance and therapeutic properties. It has been an integral part of various cultural and religious practices.

Region:

Indian Sandalwood is native to the tropical dry forests of India and Sri Lanka, but over-exploitation has made its wild population endangered.

Ancient Uses:

- Historically, Indian sandalwood has been a staple in Ayurvedic medicine for treating ailments like coughs, colds, indigestion, and fever. Its calming properties have also been utilized in religious rituals and spiritual practices across India and Sri Lanka, reflecting its cultural significance.

Modern research:

- Sandalwood oil has antiinflammatory properties and can mimic ibuprofen by inhibiting an enzyme named cyclooxygenases, which is involved in molecules causing pain and inflammation.(583)
- Indian sandalwood oil has antioxidant potential and can serve as a protective and anti-aging active ingredient in skincare remedies like face packs and scrubs.(584)
- Indian sandalwood essential oil has therapeutic potentials for treating common colds, bronchitis, skin disorders, heart ailments, general weakness, fever, urinary tract infections, and inflammation.(585)
- It is useful in reducing vomiting, fever, thirst, and body heat. It has poison-expelling or counteracting and calming properties.(586)

Side Effects:

While generally considered safe, Indian sandalwood oil might cause skin irritation in some individuals, especially when applied topically in concentrated forms.

Parts used:

The most valued part of the Indian sandalwood tree is its fragrant wood, from which the essential oil is extracted.

Indian sandalwood in various forms

Dosage:

- For aromatherapy, a few drops of sandalwood oil can be used in a diffuser. For topical application, dilute sandalwood oil with a carrier oil (like almond or jojoba oil) before applying to the skin. The specific dosage can vary, so it's recommended to follow product instructions or consult a healthcare professional for personalized guidance.

Synergies:

★★★★

Sandalwood, Turmeric, and Rosewater

Blend sandalwood powder with turmeric and rosewater, and apply it to the skin for synergistic antibacterial and moisturizing effect.(587)

★★★★

Sandalwood and Mustard

Indian sandalwood essential oil can be combined with mustard oil in a ratio of 1:2 and applied to the skin to treat acne and pimples.(588)

★★★

Sandalwood and Ginger

For urinary tract infections, consume a mixture of few drops of sandalwood essential oils and ginger extract water or carom seed extract water.(589)

★★★★

Sandalwood oil

Pair sandalwood oil with floral essential oils like lavender, jasmine, and geranium. Sandalwood also blends well with citrus oils like Bergamot or Grapefruit due to its sweet, uplifting nature. You can also blend sandalwood essential oil with warm, spicy oils like Frankincense.(590)

Juniperus communis

Juniper Berry

The juniper berry isn't a true berry but a cone from evergreen shrubs and trees in the genus Juniperus. These "berries" have fleshy scales and a distinctive, pungent aroma.

Versatile Healer: From Digestive Aid to Athletic Booster

Juniper berries have a storied past, a balance of culinary spice and medicinal powerhouse. Known for their strong, resinous flavor, these berries, when dried, are commonly used as a spice in European cuisines and for flavoring gin and liqueurs.

Region:

Juniper berries are found across the Northern Hemisphere, thriving in Europe, Asia, and North America's forests and mountainous regions.

Ancient Uses:

- In ancient Egypt and Rome, juniper berries were a remedy for digestive issues, skin conditions, and headaches.
- Athletes in ancient Olympic competitions used them to enhance endurance.
- Traditionally, these berries have been a go-to for treating indigestion and menstrual cramps.

Modern research:

- Juniper berries have antioxidant, antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal activities, as well as anti-inflammatory, cytotoxic, hypoglycemic, and hypolipidemic effects.(606)
- Juniper berry essential oil has strong antioxidant properties and can block oxidation processes in yeast cells by increasing the activity of antioxidant enzymes.(607)
- Juniper berry and wood essential oils have antioxidant and blood glucose lowering properties. (608)
- Juniper berry is used as a herbal medicine due to its essential oil's diuretic and antiinflammatory activities. It increases bile secretion and promotes the flow of bile juices in the intestine. (609)

Side Effects:

While generally safe, some people might experience stomach upset or kidney irritation with excessive consumption. Those with kidney problems should use juniper berries cautiously.

Parts used:

Primarily the berries, but leaves and bark are also used in some traditional remedies.

Fresh juniper berries

Dosage:

- Typically, juniper berries are used in cooking, which makes it hard to quantify a precise dosage. For medicinal purposes, doses of 20-100 mg of juniper oil or 2-10 grams of crushed berries per day are common. It's best to start with the lower end of this range.

Synergies:

★★★★

Juniper, Gentamicin, Amoxicillin, and Cefazolin

Juniper berry essential oil can be combined with gentamicin, amoxicillin, and cefazolin for synergistic and additive effects against various bacteria.(610)

Piper methysticum

Kava

Kava is a tropical perennial shrub that grows up to 3 meters (9.8 feet) tall. It has heart-shaped leaves and produces clusters of small, yellow flowers.

Anxiety Relief and Muscle Relaxation

Kava, also known as kava-kava, has a long history of use in Pacific Island cultures as a social and ceremonial drink. It is made from the ground roots of the kava plant and has a sedative and anesthetic effect when consumed. The name "kava" comes from the Polynesian word "awa," which means bitter.

Region:

Pacific Islands, including Fiji, Hawaii, and Vanuatu

Ancient Uses:

- Kava, a traditional South Pacific beverage, was historically used to combat fatigue, induce relaxation, and treat conditions like asthma and rheumatism.
- In the late 19th century, it gained recognition as a cardiac stimulant, CNS depressant, and local anesthetic.
- Early 20th-century practitioners used it for issues like neuralgic pain, edema, and post-surgical anorexia.
- Kava served as a diuretic for urinary problems and a remedy for insomnia, muscle spasms, and tension.
- It was believed to have pain-relieving properties, addressing muscle aches, headaches, and various types of pain.

Modern Research:

- Kava serves as a natural treatment for generalized anxiety, supported by clinical trials and positive patient feedback, while also offering potential benefits for cardiac health.(249)
- Kava has anti-anxiety and sleep-inducing properties, and its neuroprotective activities suggest it may be beneficial for the treatment of degenerative diseases or nervous system conditions.(250)
- Kava is not just as a relaxant but also a source of medicinal properties and an alternative to alcohol.(251)

Side Effects:

Kava may lead to side effects such as dizziness, dry mouth, rashes, and stomach issues. It can impair coordination and judgment. Do not consumer beforedriving or operating heavy machinery. Rarely, kava can cause liver damage, making it unsafe for those with liver disease. It is also not recommended for nursing and pregnant women.

Parts used:

Root

Preparations:

Kava is typically consumed as a drink made by soaking the ground root in coconut milk or warm water. It can also be taken in capsule form or as a tincture.

Dosage:

You can take kavalactones (the active ingredient in kava) in a safe dose of less than 250 mg daily. Pay attention to product labeling, as different products contain different concentrations of kavalactones.

Sliced and crushed kava root

Synergies:

★★★★

Kava and Passionflower

The combination of kava and passion flower extracts enhances their individual anxiety-reducing properties, resulting in a more effective treatment for anxiety. The combination produces sedative effects, especially at higher doses, promoting relaxation and is therefore useful as a sleep aid. Kava and passionflower, when combined, also lengthen the duration of sleep induced by barbiturates, suggesting a potential role in improving sleep quality.(252)

Kefir

Kefir is a fermented milk drink similar to a thin yogurt, made from kefir grains—a combination of lactic acid bacteria and yeasts in a matrix of proteins, lipids, and sugars. These grains look like small cauliflower florets.

Boosts Gut Health and Immune System

Originating in the Caucasus Mountains, kefir was once regarded as a gift from the gods. The shepherds of the region discovered that fresh milk carried in leather pouches would occasionally ferment into an effervescent beverage. Rich in probiotics, kefir is celebrated for enhancing gut health and boosting immunity. Its name comes from the Turkish word "keyif," meaning "feeling good" after eating.

Region:

While kefir originated in Eastern Europe and Southwest Asia, it's now popular worldwide, especially in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Ancient Uses:

- Digestive Dynamo: For centuries, kefir has been a staple in diets for promoting healthy digestion and alleviating gastrointestinal disorders due to its probiotic content.
- Immunity Enhancer: The beneficial bacteria and yeasts in kefir are known to strengthen the immune system, a practice that dates back to its discovery.
- Bone Booster: With high levels of calcium and vitamin K2, kefir has been used to support bone health and prevent osteoporosis.

Modern research:

- Kefir has been associated with improved digestion, tolerance to lactose, antibacterial effect, cholesterol-lowering effects, the control of plasma glucose, anti-hypertensive effects, anti-inflammatory effects, antioxidant activity, anti-carcinogenic activity, anti-allergenic activity, and healing effects.(760)
- Kefir has health benefits such as reducing lactose intolerance symptoms, stimulating the immune system, lowering cholesterol, and having antimutagenic and anticarcinogenic properties.(761)
- Kefir has been associated with health benefits such as cholesterol metabolism, antimicrobial activity, tumor suppression, wound healing speed, and modulation of the immune system, including alleviation of allergy and asthma symptoms.(762)
- Kefir is a good source of protein and health-promoting bacteria, potentially improving recovery from exercise and the health and well-being of cancer survivors.(763)

Kefir drink and kefir grains

Side Effects:

Kefir is generally safe, but overconsumption may lead to bloating, constipation, or an upset stomach. People with lactose intolerance should proceed with caution, although the fermentation process reduces much of the lactose found in milk.

Parts used:

Fermented milk produced using kefir grains.

Preparations:

Kefir can be drunk on its own or blended into smoothies. It can also be used in salad dressings, soups, or baked goods. Homemade kefir is made by adding kefir grains to milk and allowing it to ferment for 24 hours.

Dosage:

- Oral: Drink 100-200 ml of kefir daily, either in the morning or before bed, for gut health. You can increase the quantity gradually as your body adapts to the probiotics.

Synergies:

★★★★

Kefir and Horse bean

Combining bean milk from sprouted horse bean seeds with cow's milk in kefir makes a healthier and biologically complete drink with improved quality and a boost to the good bacteria in the milk.(764)

★★★★

Kefir from goat milk and soy milk

Kefir combination from goat milk and soy milk can effectively maintain lipid profile, decrease plasma glucose, increase activity of intracellular antioxidant enzymes, and improve pancreatic-cells in diabetic animal models.(765)

Kombucha

Kombucha is a fermented, slightly effervescent, sweetened black or green tea drink, often consumed for its supposed health benefits. It's produced by fermenting tea using a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast (SCOBY).

Boosts Digestion and Enhances Immunity

Steeped in history and tradition, Kombucha has been a health elixir in China since 221 BC, where it was known as the "Tea of Immortality." Its fame spread through Russia and Eastern Europe, gaining popularity in the West in recent years for its probiotic properties.

Region:

Originating in Northeast China, Kombucha is now brewed globally, with each region having its unique twist on the ancient recipe

Ancient Uses:

- Gut Health Enhancer: The drink's probiotic content supports a healthy gut microbiome, improving digestion and reducing inflammation.
- Immune System Booster: Rich in antioxidants, Kombucha strengthens the immune system, offering protection against common colds and flu.
- Energy Elevator: Believed to increase energy levels, it's been used as a natural stimulant without the harsh effects of caffeine.
- Mood Moderator: Its natural fermentation process produces B vitamins and amino acids, aiding in stress reduction and mood enhancement.

Modern Research:

- Kombucha has been shown to improve cancer resistance, prevent cardiovascular diseases, promote digestive functions, stimulate the immune system, reduce inflammation, and provide other health benefits. (773)
- Kombucha contains high amounts of protein, high phenolic content, and low sugars, making it a powerful probiotic with proven health benefits for the human gut.(774)
- Kombucha's health benefits are primarily related to its bioactive compounds, which have antioxidant, antimicrobial, probiotic, and other positive effects due to fermentation.(775)

Side Effects:

Excessive consumption can lead to digestive upset, allergic reactions, and may affect blood sugar levels. Homemade Kombucha carries a risk of contamination if not prepared correctly.

Parts used:

The fermented tea

Kombucha

Preparations:

Kombucha can be enjoyed as a refreshing drink on its own or mixed into non-alcoholic cocktails. It can also be used in dressings, marinades, and other recipes. You can brew it at home following the recipes in this book or purchase it pre-made.

Dosage:

Drink 4-8 ounces of Kombucha daily, ideally with meals to aid digestion. It's recommended to start with a smaller amount to assess tolerance and gradually increase.

Synergies:

★★★★

Kombucha and Wheatgrass

Blending wheatgrass juice with traditional kombucha enhances its phenolic compounds and antioxidant activity, potentially reducing oxidative stress.(776)

★★★

Kombuch, Peppermint, and Stinging nettle

Kombucha beverages with peppermint and stinging nettle extract showed the highest antioxidant potential towards hydroxyl radical after digestion. (777)

Pueraria lobata

Kudzu

Kudzu is a climbing, coiling, and trailing vine that can grow very rapidly. It has compound leaves with three broad leaflets and produces clusters of purple flowers.

Assists in Alcohol Addiction Recovery and Supports Heart Health

Known for its vigorous growth and broad leaves, Kudzu is more than just a prolific vine. In traditional Chinese medicine, it has been valued for centuries for its medicinal properties, particularly its ability to treat alcoholism and its symptoms.

Region:

Kudzu is native to East Asia and South Asia, but it is most recognized for its aggressive growth in the southeastern United States, where it is often considered an invasive species.

Ancient Uses:

- Traditional Chinese medicine has been using kudzu to help reduce alcohol cravings and support alcohol addiction recovery. It was believed that kudzu root extracts or preparations could help decrease the desire for alcohol consumption and alleviate symptoms of withdrawal.
- Kudzu has been traditionally used to address various digestive issues. It was believed to have properties that could help soothe the stomach, relieve indigestion, reduce nausea, and alleviate symptoms of diarrhea.
- Traditional medicine employed kudzu to support cardiovascular health. It was believed that kudzu extracts or supplements could help dilate blood vessels, improve blood flow, and lower blood pressure, potentially benefiting conditions like hypertension and heart disease.

Modern research:

- The leaves of kudzu are a good source of compounds that can be used in functional or medicinal foods to prevent or treat diseases related to inflammation and oxidative stress.(482)
- Kudzu has shown positive effects on metabolic health, including weight reduction, and may be used as a treatment option for overweight individuals suffering from osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.(483)

Parts used:

Roots, flowers, and leaves

Preparations:

Kudzu can be ground into a powder for use in capsules or mixed with water, brewed as a tea with up to 30 grams of dried root, or made into a tincture. It can also be cooked and eaten, and it is sometimes used in traditional Chinese cooking. Take 1-2 grams of the powdered root 3 times daily.

Fresh kudzu root

Lavandula spp.

Lavender

Lavender is a herb with a woody base and fragrant purple flowers. It grows to about 60 cm (24 inches) and has narrow, gray-green leaves.

Calming, Sleep Aid, and Skin Health

Derived from the Latin word "lavare," meaning "to wash," lavender adds a touch of cleansing heritage. Renowned for its calming and relaxing effects, it aids in promoting sleep and reducing anxiety. Lavender addresses skin concerns like acne and sunburn when applied topically, and eases digestive issues when taken orally.

Region:

Lavender is native to the Mediterranean but is now cultivated worldwide, including in Europe, North America, and Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Dioscorides, a Greek physician, believed lavender had medicinal properties, including relieving headaches, indigestion, and sore throats when ingested, and aiding wound cleaning when applied externally.
- The Romans valued lavender's cleansing and soothing qualities, incorporating it into their bathing rituals, giving it the name "lavender" from the Latin "lava," meaning "to wash." Lavender was recognized for its relaxing and antiseptic properties.
- Lavender essential oil has been commonly used in aromatherapy to promote relaxation and reduce stress. It can be inhaled directly from the bottle or added to a diffuser or humidifier.
- Lavender oil has been used topically to treat acne, sunburn, and other skin conditions. It is also used to soothe insect bites and stings. Lavender tea is sometimes used to treat digestive issues. It can be made by steeping dried lavender flowers in hot water for 5-10 minutes.

Modern research:

- Lavender essential oil has antioxidants that can help with digestion and the nervous system. It may also prevent dementia and slow cancer cell growth. Lavender is good for skin problems and burns.(253)
- Using lavender-scented bath oil for infants led to more relaxed mothers and babies, with reduced cortisol levels, confirming the calming and sleep-inducing effects of lavender.(254)
- Topical application of lavender oil may support early-stage wound healing by promoting the formation of granulation tissue, collagen replacement, and wound contraction.(255)

Side Effects:

Lavender is generally safe, but in some individuals, it may cause allergic symptoms like itching, redness, or swelling.

Parts used:

Flowers and leaves

Preparations:

Lavender commercial products include oils, gels, extracts, lotions, soaps, teas, and tinctures made from dried flowers and essential oils. You can also purchase whole, dried lavender flowers. Lavender oil can be applied directly to the skin or mixed with a carrier oil like almond oil or jojoba oil.

Dosage:

Silexan, a lavender oil, is typically taken orally by adults at doses of 80-160 mg daily for up to 10 weeks. Lavender essential oil is used in aromatherapy, as well as in lotions and massage oils, with 5-7 drops per use in aromatherapy.

Dried lavender flowers

Synergies:

★★★

Lavender and Chamomile

Aromatherapy with lavender and chamomile essential oils is a beneficial method for reducing the daily use of analgesics, resulting in fewer side effects and better pain control. It can be used in combination with routine analgesics.(256)

★★★

Lavender and Tea tree

Tea tree and lavender essential oils, when used in combination, have the ability to combat fungal infections. This synergy appears to result from complex chemical interactions within the oils.(257)

Citrus limon

Lemon

A vibrant, evergreen tree adorned with dark green leaves and delicate white-pink blossoms that produce bright yellow citrus fruits.

Boosts Immunity and Aids Digestion

The sight and smell of vibrant yellow lemons instantly lift your mood. Besides their tangy taste, lemons offer centuries-old health benefits. Packed with vitamin C, they boost immunity and digestion. The refreshing scent has mood-enhancing effects.

Region:

Originating from Northeast India, lemon trees have made their way across the globe. These sun-loving trees now flourish in warm, temperate regions, including the Mediterranean, America, and parts of Africa and Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Historically, lemons have been praised for their medicinal properties. From the courts of ancient Rome to the ships of early European explorers battling scurvy, this citrus marvel has been used to enhance immunity, aid digestion, and refresh the senses.
- It has been traditionally used to support digestion. Its acidic properties were believed to stimulate the production of digestive juices, aiding in the breakdown of food. Lemon water or lemon-based preparations were consumed to alleviate indigestion and bloating, and promote overall digestive health.
- It has been a popular traditional remedy for colds and flu. The vitamin C content in lemon was thought to boost the immune system and help fight off infections. Lemon juice mixed with warm water and honey was commonly consumed to soothe sore throats, relieve congestion, and provide temporary relief from coughing.

Modern research:

- Lemon extract can lower high uric acid levels with the help of potassium citrate.(484)
- Citrus lemon leaves have very high antibacterial potential. (485)

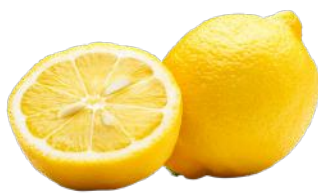
Parts used:

The whole lemon is a bundle of health; the juice, pulp, zest (rind), and even the leaves have been used in various culinary, wellness, and skincare applications.

Preparations:

- Raw: enjoyed in salads, as a condiment, or a refreshing addition to water or tea.
- Juice: is widely used in cooking, baking, beverages, and as a home remedy for various ailments. Used according to personal taste and dietary needs.
- Zest: The rind is often grated and used to add a zingy flavor to dishes and baked goods.
- Essential Oil: Extracted for use in aromatherapy, skincare, and household cleaning products. Always dilute in a carrier oil and use as advised.

Lemon rind and juice



Whole and sliced lemon

Synergies:

★★★★★

Lemon and Tomato

Lemon and tomato extracts have been shown to have synergistic effects on cognitive health. Incorporating tomatoes and lemons into your diet may contribute to reducing oxidative stress and promoting cognitive function.(486)

★★★★★

Lemon extract

Lemon extract combined with mild heat (54°C) shows a synergistic effect in killing bacteria in food, thus increasing its shelf-life, acting as a preservative.(487)

★★★★★

Lemon-flavored black tea and Honey

Adding dark amber honey to lemon-flavored black tea increases its antioxidant properties, while maintaining the various health benefits of phenolics, flavonoids, and organic acids.(488)

Melissa officinalis

Lemon balm

Lemon balm is an aromatic herb with fragrant, lemon-scented leaves and small, white, or pale pink flowers. It grows up to 1 meter (3 feet) tall and has a hairy stem.

Eases Anxiety, Promotes Sleep, and Skin Health

Belonging to the vivacious mint family, this herb packs a therapeutic punch in a charmingly refreshing aroma. Its playful connection with basil and mint is a nod to its Greek roots – 'melissophyllon', meaning 'bee leaf'. It helps reduce anxiety, promote sleep, and rejuvenate your skin naturally.

Region:

Lemon balm is a perennial herb native to the Mediterranean region, including countries such as Italy, Greece, and Turkey. It is now widely cultivated in regions with suitable climates in Europe, North America, and Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Lemon balm has a history dating over 2,000 years, documented by Theophrastus in 300 BC and introduced to Europe in the 7th century. It was cherished by various historical figures, including the Tudors and botanists like John Gerard and Nicholas Culpeper.
- In traditional Austrian medicine, lemon balm leaves were used for herbal tea and external applications. In North America, it was introduced by European colonists and cultivated in Thomas Jefferson's gardens.
- Lemon balm essential oil has been used for relaxation and mood enhancement. It can be inhaled directly or diffused.
- Lemon balm is often applied topically to treat cold sores, cuts, and skin issues, either directly or mixed with a carrier oil.
- Lemon balm tea is commonly used to promote sleep and alleviate anxiety.

Modern research:

- A 2016 study indicates that Lemon balm may enhance the body's natural defenses against oxidative stress, reducing the risk of diseases linked to it, with no adverse effects.(258)
- Ethanolic lemon balm extract could prevent and treat type 2 diabetes, as well as any related issues such as dyslipidemia and hypercholesterolemia.(259)

Side Effects:

Side effects are mild and might include increased appetite, dizziness, nausea, and wheezing.

Parts used:

Leaves

Dried lemon balm

Preparations:

For skincare, apply lemon balm directly or mix it with a carrier oil. You can also make a soothing tea by steeping dried lemon balm leaves in hot water.

Dosage:

Take 300-500 mg of dried lemon balm capsules 3 times daily. For tea, steep 1.5-4.5 grams of dried lemon balm in hot water, up to 4 times a day. Consume up to 10 ml of tincture daily, and apply topical cream as directed, up to 3 times daily for the affected area.

Synergies:

★★★
Lemon balm and Chamomile

Lemon balm and chamomile syrup help alleviate various symptoms, including chest pain, discomfort, and anxiety in patients with drug-resistant cardiac Syndrome X.(260)

★★★
Lemon balm and Valerian root

The combination of lemon balm with valerian root has been found to improve sleep quality and reduce anxiety symptoms.(261)

★★★
Lemon balm and Passionflower

Lemon balm combined with passionflower essential oil in diffusers has shown potential in reducing hypomanic or manic symptoms.(262)

★★★
Lemon balm and Chamomile

Mixing lemon balm and chamomile essential oils for diffusion or inhalation can induce relaxation and alleviate stress.(263)

For anxiety relief, try using lemon balm in a tea. The act of inhaling its aroma while drinking can enhance its calming effects due to the aromatic compounds.

Cymbopogon citratus

Lemongrass

A perennial grass that grows in dense clumps and can reach up to 1.5 meters in height. It has long, thin leaves that are gray-green or blue-green in color, and its scent is similar to that of lemons.

Digestive Health and Stress Relief

Known for its distinct, lemony aroma, lemongrass has been widely used in Asian cuisine, aromatherapy, and traditional medicine. Its unique flavor and scent, coupled with its reputed health benefits, make it a highly valued herb in various cultures.

Region:

Lemongrass is native to tropical regions of Asia, especially India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. It is now cultivated in many tropical and subtropical regions worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Lemongrass has been traditionally used to support digestive health. It was believed to have carminative properties, helping to relieve bloating, gas, and stomach discomfort. Lemongrass tea or infusions were consumed to promote healthy digestion and alleviate digestive issues.
- It has been used in traditional medicine for its calming and stress-relieving properties. It was believed to have soothing effects on the nervous system, helping to reduce anxiety and tension and promote relaxation. The aroma of lemongrass was also utilized in aromatherapy to create a calming ambiance.
- Traditional medicine employed lemongrass to address fever and inflammation. It was believed to have antipyretic (fever-reducing) and anti-inflammatory properties. Lemongrass tea or extracts were used to lower body temperature during fevers and to relieve symptoms associated with inflammation, such as muscle pain and joint discomfort.

Modern research:

- Lemongrass essential oil has antimicrobial, insecticidal, analgesic, and anticancer properties, and insecticidal properties.(489)
- Research confirms that lemongrass essential oil exhibits strong antimicrobial effects against oral microorganisms, therefore benefiting oral health.(490)
- Lemongrass essential oil and its constituents, citral and geranial, show promise to reduce allergies and inflammatory diseases.(491)
- Lemongrass shows potential for use during chemotherapy to enhance the antitumor response and reduce resistance in prostate cancer.(492)

Parts used:

The leaves and oil are used for medicinal purposes. The lower portion of the leaf blade is often used in cooking.

Preparations:

Lemongrass leaves can be brewed into a tea, used in cooking, or distilled into an essential oil. The oil can be used in aromatherapy, massage oils, and other skincare products. Cut lemongrass strips into pieces and add them to boiling water to make tea. Have it twice a day. In cooking, lemongrass is a common ingredient in soups and curries. Cut lemongrass strips into pieces and add them to boiling water to make tea. Have it twice a day.

Chopped lemongrass leaves and stalk

Synergies:

★★★★

Lemongrass and Ginger

Tea prepared using a combination of lemongrass leaves and ginger is beneficial for arthritis and diabetic patients due to its synergistic anti-inflammatory and cholesterol-lowering, and blood regulating effects.(493)

★★★

Lemongrass and Black pepper

To relieve period pain, add black pepper to a brew of lemongrass, and drink twice a day.(494)

★★★★

Lemongrass and Coconut oil

Combine lemongrass essential oil and coconut oil in a ratio of 1:1 and massage onto the joints to relieve joint pain, back pain, and inflammation.(495)

Glycyrrhiza glabra

Licorice

Licorice is a perennial herb that grows up to 1 meter (3 feet) tall. It has pinnate leaves and small, purplish-blue flowers. The fruits are oblong and contain several seeds.

Soothes Respiratory Issues, Aids Digestion, and Skin Health

Revered for its delightful sweetness, licorice is used globally to flavor candy, alcohol, and sweets. This root is used to address respiratory, digestive, and skin concerns. With abundant anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, licorice also supports immune health. In the Netherlands, people chew dried licorice root sticks, releasing an intensely sweet flavor, around 30-50 times sweeter than regular sugar.

Region:

Licorice is native to Southern Europe, the Mediterranean, and Asia. It is now widely cultivated in other parts of the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Licorice's history dates back to 2300 B.C., when it was called a "miraculous plant." The Greeks used it in remedies, particularly for cough medicines, due to its anti-inflammatory and soothing properties. It was even found in King Tut's tomb, though the reason remains a mystery.
- Respiratory Relief: Licorice has expectorant properties that help clear mucus from the respiratory tract. It's been used for treating coughs, sore throats, and other respiratory issues.
- Licorice has been applied topically or used in formulations to address skin issues such as redness, inflammation, and irritation.
- Licorice has traditional applications in addressing fatigue, menopausal symptoms, and stress. It's believed to have antioxidant and immune-boosting properties and may serve as an anti-inflammatory agent. However, more research is needed to understand its effects fully.

Modern research:

- Licorice and its compounds possess anti-inflammatory properties which have the ability to fight inflammation caused by a variety of chronic conditions. (265)
- Flavonoids and triterpenoids extracted from licorice have antidiabetic properties.(266)
- Licorice has antacid properties, which can neutralize stomach acid, making it useful for stomach ulcers and acid reflux. It may also protect the stomach lining and reduce inflammation. (267)

Side Effects:

Higher doses given for extended periods may pose a risk of hypokalemia. People with heart disease, high blood pressure, or kidney disease are particularly vulnerable to these adverse outcomes. Serious side effects can occur from consuming high doses of licorice in the form of candy, tablets, or tea.

Parts used:

Root

Preparations:

Licorice can be consumed as a supplement in the form of capsules or tablets. It can also be consumed as tea or added to food and beverages as a natural sweetener.

Dosage:

Licorice root has been used in daily doses from 760 mg to 15 g for ulcer, gastritis, and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.

Healthy adults can take 100 mg of licorice extract daily as a safe dose.

Licorice root and candy

Synergies:

★★★★

Licorice and Ginger

A soothing and digestive tea blend made by adding ginger to licorice further enhances the combined antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. (268)

★★★★★

Licorice and Honey

Licorice can be combined with honey to create a natural cough syrup or throat lozenge.(269)

★★★★

Licorice, Boswellia, and Turmeric

The combination of Licorice with boswellia and turmeric has been effective in improving asthmatic patients' symptoms.(270)

Citrus aurantiifolia

Lime

Lime is a citrus fruit, typically round, green, 3–6 cm in diameter, and containing acidic juice vesicles. Limes are rich in vitamin C and have a zesty, tart flavor.

Boosts Immune System and Enhances Skin Health

Limes have been celebrated throughout history for their medicinal properties. They were essential to British sailors, known as "limeys," who used them to prevent scurvy during long sea voyages. The name lime is derived from the Arabic word "limah," which means sour fruit. Today, limes are a staple in culinary and therapeutic practices worldwide, particularly for their immune-boosting and skin-enhancing benefits.

Region:

Originally from Southeast Asia, limes are now cultivated in warm climates around the world, including Mexico, India, and Egypt.

Ancient Uses:

- Disease Fighter: Sailors in the 19th century consumed lime juice to prevent scurvy, a disease caused by vitamin C deficiency.
- Digestive Aid: Traditionally, lime juice has been used to aid digestion, alleviate heartburn, and reduce bloating.
- Skin Elixir: The natural oils in lime are prized for rejuvenating the skin, treating acne, and improving complexion. In Ayurveda, lime juice mixed with turmeric was a popular remedy for radiant skin.

Modern research:

- Lime juice has a protective effect on white blood cells, potentially helping with leukopenia.(801)
- Lime juice has chemopreventive effects on pancreatic cancer cells, with antioxidant activity and anti-proliferative abilities being closely linked to the flavonoid and limonoid content.(802)
- Lime is high in dietary fiber and has a good balance of insoluble and soluble fiber, leading to improved digestive health.(803)

Side Effects:

Excessive consumption of lime juice can erode tooth enamel and cause gastroesophageal reflux in sensitive individuals. Applying lime juice directly to the skin can increase sensitivity to sunlight.

Parts used:

Fruit, juice, and zest

Preparations:

Lime juice can be consumed directly, added to water, or used in cooking. Lime zest is often used to flavor dishes and desserts. For topical use, mix lime juice with other natural ingredients to create face masks or scrubs.

Fresh limes

Dosage:

- Oral: Squeeze half a lime into a glass of warm water and drink it first thing in the morning to boost digestion and immunity. Use lime juice in cooking as desired.
- Topical: Apply a mixture of lime juice and honey to the face, avoiding the eyes. Leave on for 10-15 minutes before rinsing with warm water. This can be done 2-3 times a week for radiant skin.

Synergies:

★★★★

Lime and Tea

A mix of lime and lipton tea (Camelia sinensis) can reduce high plasma glucose levels and may be beneficial in managing diabetes.(804)

★★★★

Lime and Ginger

Herbal syrups combining ginger and lime juice have potential benefits for body fitness, including improving the immune system.(805)

★★★★★

Lime, Papaya, and Pomegranate

The effect of combining papaya leaf extract, pomegranate juice, and sweet lime (mausambi juice) enhances their individual digestive, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties, creating a potent health juice with reduced side effects and allergic symptoms.(806)

Add lime juice to green vegetables; its vitamin C content enhances iron absorption, especially from plant sources.

Tilia spp.

Linden Flower

For Relaxation and Respiratory Health

A small, ornamental tree with heart-shaped, serrated leaves and yellow-white flowers. The flowers and leaves are used for their sweet, aromatic qualities.

Linden flower, with its delightful fragrance, has been cherished for centuries in Europe for its soothing and medicinal properties. It is especially famous for its pleasant-tasting tea, which is both calming and beneficial for health.

Region:

Native to Europe, cultivated worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- In Europe, linden was a go-to remedy for fevers, colds, headaches, heart, and digestive issues. Its use in traditional Chinese medicine includes treatments for insomnia, anxiety, depression, inflammation, and respiratory health. The flowers and leaves were brewed into teas, while extracts and tinctures were also popular.

Modern research:

- Silver linden leaves contain flavonoids with potent antinociceptive and anti-inflammatory activities, which are used in the treatment of the common cold and bronchitis.(611)
- Edible flowers, including linden blossom, have anti-diabetic and anti-aging properties due to their high content of bioactive compounds.(612)
- The methanolic extract from the linden flowers shows a hepatoprotective effect against liver injury in mice.(613)
- Honey that is derived principally from the linden flower, is generally considered the best in the world.(614)

Side Effects:

While generally safe, linden flower can sometimes cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. It's also advised to avoid excessive consumption as it might lead to heart problems in rare cases.

Parts used:

Primarily the fragrant flowers, occasionally leaves.

Dosage:

For tea, 1-2 teaspoons of dried flowers per cup of boiling water, steeped for 5-10 minutes. Drink up to 3 cups daily.

Linden flower with leaves

Synergies:

★★★★

Licorice and Ginger

Create a soothing cough relief tea by harnessing the synergistic effects of linden flowers, rose hips, chamomile, cinnamon sticks, and hibiscus flowers. Boil these ingredients in water for 10 minutes and drink it warm.(615)

Harvest linden flowers just before they fully open. This is when their sedative and diaphoretic properties are most concentrated.

Hericium erinaceus

Lion's Mane Mushroom

Lion's mane is a large, white, shaggy mushroom that resembles a lion's mane as it grows.

Cognitive and Nervous System Support

Lion's mane mushrooms, with their distinctive cascading spines, are not only intriguing to look at but are also celebrated for their nutritional and medicinal qualities. These fungi have been revered in traditional Chinese medicine for their neuroprotective properties.

Region:

Lion's mane mushrooms are native to North America, Europe, and Asia. They can be found growing on hardwood trees in late summer and fall.

Ancient Uses:

- Lion's mane mushrooms have been traditionally used to support brain health and enhance cognitive function. They were believed to improve memory, focus, and overall mental clarity.
- Ancient traditional medicine employed lion's mane mushrooms to promote digestive health. They were thought to aid in digestion, alleviate stomach discomfort, and improve gastrointestinal function.
- Lion's mane mushrooms were used to support the nervous system and promote overall nerve health. They were believed to help reduce inflammation and provide relief from nerve-related conditions.

Modern research:

- Lion's mane is known to help control cholesterol levels while also reducing or preventing damage caused by oxidative stress.(496)
- Lion's mane mushrooms aid in digestive health by regulating gastric secretions, improving anti-inflammatory and antioxidant status, boosting the release of substances that contribute to the body's defense mechanisms.(497)
- It exhibits protective effects on those suffering from Alzheimer's disease, potentially slowing down its progression.(498)

Parts used:

The fruiting body of the mushroom, which is the part that grows above ground, is used in cooking and for medicinal purposes.

Close-up of lion's mane fruiting body

Preparations:

Lion's Mane can be cooked and eaten, dried and made into a tea, or processed into a powder or liquid extract. It is often used in soups and stir-fries, and its flavor is sometimes likened to that of lobster or shrimp. A common dosage is 1,000 mg taken 1-3 times per day in capsule or extract form.

Synergies:

★★★★

Lion's mane, Reishi, and Cordyceps

Dietary supplementation with lion's mane, reishi, and cordyceps mushrooms may have a beneficial effect on cognitive impairment and help to improve overall cognitive function.(499)

★★★★

Lion's mane and Chlorella

Chlorella and lion's mane mushroom could improve depression and have the potential to be used as an antidepressant.(500)

Lobelia inflata

Lobelia

Lobelia is an annual or biennial plant that grows up to 1 meter tall. It has a hairy stem, yellowish-green leaves, and pale violet-blue flowers.

Respiratory Relief and Muscle Relaxant

Lobelia, with its delicate flowers and potent properties, has been both revered and controversial in the history of herbal medicine. Known for its strong effect on the respiratory system, it has been used traditionally to address a variety of health conditions, including asthma and bronchitis.

Region:

Lobelia, also known as Indian Tobacco, is native to North America, where it grows in fields, pastures, and woodland areas.

Ancient Uses:

- Native American tribes used lobelia as a potent medicinal plant to treat respiratory conditions, muscle and joint pain, and to induce vomiting for purification rituals. In the 19th century, it was commonly used in the practice of Eclectic Medicine in the United States.
- Lobelia was used as a relaxant and antispasmodic agent. It was believed to help relax muscles and alleviate muscle spasms, making it useful for conditions such as muscle cramps and menstrual cramps.
- Lobelia was historically used to help reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms in individuals trying to quit smoking. It was believed to have a similar effect on the nervous system as nicotine, providing a potential alternative for those seeking to quit tobacco.

Modern research:

- Lobelia herb is non-toxic and exhibits anti-inflammatory and anticonvulsant activities.(501)
- Compound lobelia exhibits anti-inflammatory effects on foot swelling and white blood cell migration in rats, as well as significant improvement in acute pharyngitis rat models.(502)

Parts used:

The entire above-ground part of the plant – stem, leaves, and flowers – is harvested and used for medicinal purposes.

Preparations:

Lobelia can be prepared as a dried herb, tincture, or infusion. Because of its strong effects and potential toxicity, it should be used with caution and under the guidance of a healthcare provider or professional herbalist.

Lobelia aerial parts

Dosage:

A typical dose might be 20 to 60 drops of a tincture, but this can vary widely. Due to its potential toxicity, it's crucial to use this herb under professional guidance and to start with lower doses, slowly increasing as tolerated and as recommended by a healthcare provider.

Side Effects:

It's important to note that excessive consumption of Lobelia can cause serious side effects, including rapid heartbeat, hypotension, coma, and even death. Betel nut and tobacco shows genotoxic activity, potentially causing oral, pharyngeal, and esophageal carcinomas.(503)

Dry crushed aerial parts

Lepidium meyenii

Maca

Maca is a perennial plant that produces a radish-like root, which is the part of the plant most commonly used. The root comes in a variety of colors including white, red, and black.

Energy, Libido, and Fertility Enhancer

Known for its endurance-enhancing properties, maca has been cultivated for thousands of years in the harsh conditions of the Andes mountains. Today, it is recognized worldwide for its potential to boost energy, improve mood, and enhance sexual health.

Region:

Maca is native to the high Andes of Peru and Bolivia, where it grows at altitudes above 4,000 meters.

Ancient Uses:

- In ancient Andean societies, maca was believed to enhance fertility and sexual desire, boost energy, and improve mental clarity. The Incan warriors reportedly consumed it before going into battle to increase their strength and endurance.
- Hormonal Balance: Maca was used to promote hormonal balance in both men and women. It was believed to support the endocrine system and help regulate hormone levels, potentially alleviating symptoms associated with hormonal imbalances.
- Maca was traditionally used as an aphrodisiac and to enhance fertility. It was believed to boost libido, improve sexual function, and increase fertility in both men and women.

Modern research:

- Studies revealed that maca exhibits antiviral properties against both Flu-A and Flu-B viruses.(504)
- Maca is found to possess effective antioxidants, a high percentage of glucosinolates, and other important components with strong antioxidant capacities. (505)
- Maca exhibits promising properties for fertility, sexual dysfunction, bone health, memory, and skin protection. Clinical trials confirm its efficacy in improving sexual health and fertility. With its adaptogenic qualities, maca shows potential as a nutraceutical for disease prevention.(506)

Parts used:

Roots

Preparations:

The dried root can be taken in capsule or tablet form, added to smoothies or food recipes, or brewed as a tea. Maca has a slightly sweet, nutty flavor and is often used in baking or smoothie recipes. A common dosage might be 1.5 to 3 grams of maca root powder per day. Maca is generally considered safe, but some people may experience side effects like jitteriness or insomnia, especially with high doses.

Dry sliced and powdered maca roots

Macadamia integrifolia

Macadamia Nuts

Macadamia nuts are small, buttery-flavored nuts obtained from the macadamia tree. Renowned for their creamy texture and delicate taste, these nuts are rich in nutrients, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals.

Promotes Heart Health and Aids Weight Management

Held in high regard by Australian aboriginals for their nutritional and medicinal properties, macadamia nuts were traded as valuable commodities. They have been traditionally used to strengthen the body, support heart health, and aid in weight management. In the modern era, macadamia nuts are celebrated for their exquisite flavor and health benefits.

Region:

Native to Australia, macadamia trees have been cultivated in various regions, including Hawaii, South Africa, and Central and South America.

Ancient Uses:

- Cardiovascular Care: Aboriginals used macadamia nuts to boost heart health, owing to their high monounsaturated fat content.
- Weight Management Ally: These nuts were valued for their high-fat content and ability to promote satiety, aiding in weight control and preventing overeating.
- Skin Nourisher: The oil from macadamia nuts was used for skin care, valued for its moisturizing and anti-aging properties.
- Joint Support: Their anti-inflammatory properties were believed to help in reducing joint pain and arthritis symptoms.

Modern research:

- Macadamia nuts are a great substitute for simple sugars, meats, and dairy, as they are high in unsaturated fatty acids and monounsaturated fatty acids.(661)
- Nut oils contain a variety of fat-soluble bioactives, including vitamin E and phytosterols, which can help meet recommended daily intakes, thus providing the human body with various benefits.(662)
- A macadamia nut-rich diet can reduce total and LDL-cholesterol in mildly hypercholesterolemic individuals, potentially reducing cardiovascular disease risk.(663)

Parts used:

The kernel or nut of the macadamia tree.

Macadamia nuts

Side Effects:

Macadamia nuts are high in calories and fats, so they should be consumed in moderation. They can also cause allergic reactions in some individuals. Due to their high-fat content, overconsumption might lead to digestive discomfort.

Preparations:

Macadamia nuts can be enjoyed raw, roasted, or salted as a snack. They are also used in baking, cooking, and in making nut butter and oils. Macadamia nut oil is popular in both culinary and cosmetic applications.

Dosages:

Oral: A handful of macadamia nuts (about 10-12 nuts or 30 grams) is an ideal daily portion for enjoying their health benefits without excessive calorie intake.

Synergies:

★★★★

Mcadamia nut and Dark chocolate

Combining the antioxidant-rich dark chocolate with nutrient-dense macadamia nuts enhances the treat's nutritional content and provides a source of healthy monounsaturated fats, vitamins, and minerals that contribute to overall health by reducing oxidative stress in the body.(664)

★★★

Macadamia nut in Salads

Adding macadamia nuts to salads not only introduces a delightful crunch but also contributes a buttery flavor, creating a synergy of antioxidants, minerals, taste and texture in your salad.(665)

Althaea officinalis

Marshmallow

Marshmallow is a perennial herb with soft, hairy stems, leaves, and small, pale pink or white flowers. It grows up to 1.5 meters (5 feet) tall.

Soothes Digestive and Respiratory Issues, Alleviates Skin Irritation

Thriving in marshy lands, it once cured respiratory, digestive, skin, and throat issues. Surprisingly, our gooey treat drew inspiration from an Egyptian delight made with real marshmallow root. While today's version lacks that, the plant's roots and leaves still serve medicinal purposes.

Region:

Marshmallow is native to Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa but is now widely cultivated in other parts of the world.

Ancient Uses:

- The people of ancient Egypt combined marshmallow sap with grains, honey, and nuts to make cakes for pharaohs and other elites. The sap was also employed to cure a diverse range of ailments such as gout, indigestion, joint pain, sore throat, and ulcers, as well as respiratory issues such as coughs and bronchitis. Finally, the leaves were used to create a poultice that alleviated skin irritations.
- After many centuries, French chefs discovered that a malleable, scrumptious treat could be made by combining marshmallow sap with corn syrup and egg whites. It resembled the present-day marshmallow.
- Marshmallow was used to treat heartburn and indigestion. It is said to work by coating the digestive tract and reducing inflammation.
- It was used to treat coughs, colds, and other respiratory issues. It reduced inflammation in the respiratory system and thinned mucus.
- It has been applied topically to treat skin irritation and inflammation. It is believed to work by reducing inflammation and promoting healing.
- It has been used to soothe sore throats. It is believed to work by coating the throat and reducing irritation.

Modern research:

- Marshmallow extracts could reduce the healing time of wounds of second and third-degree burns. Thus, marshmallow could be usedas an additional treatment option to accelerate the healing of skin burns.(270)
- Marshmallow root extract in mouthwash could be more effective in treating stomatitis caused by chemotherapy than a standard mouthwash solution. This suggests that marshmallows could be used with chemotherapy agents to reduce the chances of developing stomatitis.(271)

Side Effects:

Marshmallow is safe at recommended doses but can trigger allergies in some. Caution is needed in diabetes, as it may lower blood sugar.

Parts used:

Root and leaves

Preparations:

Marshmallow is most commonly prepared as an infusion or tea by boiling the dried root or leaves in water. It can also be taken in capsule or tincture form.

Dosage:

It is generally safe to consume up to 4 grams of dried marshmallow root or leaves daily.

Diced marshmallow root

Synergies:

★★★★

Marshmallow, Ivy, Thyme, and Aniseed

Combining marshmallow root, ivy leaves, thyme, and aniseed creates a herbal blend for relief from mucus-related coughs due to colds, bronchitis, and respiratory diseases.(272)

★★★★

Marshmallow, Flaxseed, and Chamomile

A mouthwash solution made by boiling marshmallow root, flaxseed, and chamomile following a 1:1:1 ratio for 15 minutes can reduce inflammation, promote oral mucosa healing, and serve as a beneficial addition to a daily oral hygiene routine.(273)

Silybum marianum

Milk thistle

Milk thistle is an annual or biennial herb with large, spiny leaves and purple or pink flowers. It grows up to 2 meters (6 feet) tall.

Supports Liver Health and Offers Antioxidant Benefits

Milk thistle has a long history of medicinal use dating back to ancient civilizations like Greece and Rome. It is known for its liver-protective properties. The active ingredient in milk thistle is silymarin, found in the plant's seeds. The name "milk thistle" comes from the milky white sap produced when the leaves are cut.

Region:

Milk thistle is native to the Mediterranean region but is now widely cultivated in other parts of the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Milk thistle boasts a rich history and a well-established track record in supporting liver health. The ancient Greek physician Dioscorides, practicing between 40-90 AD, extensively documented the therapeutic attributes of milk thistle.
- Hildegard von Bingen, the first woman to publish a book on herbal remedies in 1152, documented milk thistle's uses.
- The 18th-century herbalist Culpepper noted its effectiveness for liver and spleen issues, while John Gerard in 1597 called it a remedy for melancholy diseases in his book "Anatomie of Plants".
- During the middle ages, the leaves and stalks of the milk thistle were used in salads, soups, and pies, with the leaves being considered superior to the finest cabbage. The heads were also consumed, often boiled and treated like artichoke heads.
- It is used to treat various liver conditions, including cirrhosis, hepatitis, and liver poisoning.

Modern research:

- Milk thistle displays antioxidant, antiapoptotic, anti inflammatory, and chelating properties, therefore protecting the body against various biological and chemical threats.(274)
- Cold-pressed milk thistle seed flour extract has potential health benefits, including modulating gut microbiota, free radical scavenging, anti-inflammatory, and anti-proliferative properties. (275)
- Milk thistle seed extracts show promising antioxidant and antidiabetic properties.(276)

Side Effects:

In certain individuals, using milk thistle extract may lead to diarrhea, fullness, intestinal gas, loss of appetite, nausea, and, in some cases, even headaches.

Parts used:

Seeds

Preparations:

Milk thistle is most commonly prepared as a tea or infusion by boiling the seeds in water. It can also be taken in capsule, tablet, or tincture form.

Dosage:

For general use, it's safe to take up to 420 mg of milk thistle daily.

For diabetes treatment in adults, a daily dose ranging from 210 to 600 mg of milk thistle extract for six months is recommended. An alternative regimen suggests taking 200 mg of milk thistle extract once or thrice daily for 4-12 months.

Milk thistle seeds

Synergies:

★★★★

Milk thistle and Dandelion

A combination of milk thistle and dandelion has significant benefits for liver health, including improved insulin sensitivity, glucose tolerance, reduced liver fat, and increased antioxidants. It could be a promising approach to treat liver issues associated with obesity.(277)

★★★★★

Milk thistle, Dandelion, Olive, Nettle, and Turmeric

Herbal supplementation, consisting of dandelion, olive leaf, nettle leaf, turmeric, and milk thistle, effectively reduces psoriasis severity in a 5-month study.(278)

Moringa oleifera

Moringa

Energy and Immune Support

Moringa is a fast-growing, leafy tree that reaches 10-15 meters in height. Its ability to grow quickly and adapt to various climates makes it a versatile plant in both culinary and medicinal applications.

Moringa, commonly known as the 'drumstick tree', has gained fame as a superfood. It has high levels of proteins, dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals.Its leaves outshine carrots in vitamin A and surpass oranges in vitamin C content, making it a superior source of nutrients.

Region:

Originating from South Asia, moringa oleifera thrives in tropical and subtropical climates worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Historically, moringa has been a staple in traditional medicine for its antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties. It's been explored for its potential in treating various health conditions, including certain cancers, due to its purported anti-tumor traits. Cultures around the world have harnessed its benefits for boosting immunity, energy levels, and combating fatigue.

Modern research:

- Moringa leaves show potential for reducing prolonged high blood sugar and cholesterol imbalances, due to their high content of phytochemicals, carotenoids, and glucosinolates, therefore reducing the risk factors associated with diabetes and cardiovascular disease.(624)
- Moringa seeds and oil contain monounsaturated fatty acids, sterols, tocopherols, and proteins rich in sulfated amino acids, therefore providing humans with a plethora of nutritional and dietary benefits. (625)
- Moringa has various medicinal benefits such as being antiproliferative, anti-inflammatory, antiulcer, antipyretic, antiepileptic, antispasmodic, diuretic, and may also help reduce hypertension. (626)
- Moringa leaf, fruit pulp, and seed extracts can increase the activity of conventional antibiotics against some common bacterial pathogens.(627)

Side Effects:

While Moringa is generally safe for consumption, some individuals might experience mild side effects like stomach upset or diarrhea. It's important to note its potential interaction with medications, particularly those for blood pressure and diabetes.

Parts used:

Leaves and pods (drumsticks)

Moringa stalk

Dosage:

A typical dosage of moringa leaf powder ranges from 1 to 2 teaspoons (5 to 10 grams) per day, mixed into meals or beverages. As a supplement, follow the recommended dosage on the product label. For specific health conditions, consult a healthcare professional for appropriate dosing.

Synergies:

★★★★

Moringa and Fluted pumpkin

The combination of moringa and fluted pumpkin extracts elevates energy, enhances immune function, and potentially lowers blood pressure.(628)

★★★★

Moringa extract

Cook moringa leaves in 200 ml of water until they reduce to half to make an extract. This has been shown to significantly reduce blood glucose levels, total protein, body weight, and haemoglobin in diabetic animal models.(629)

Pair moringa with a source of vitamin C (like citrus fruits) to enhance iron absorption. Moringa's iron content is more bioavailable in the presence of vitamin C.

Leonurus cardiaca

Motherwort

Motherwort, a perennial herb, stands out with its bitter taste and strong smell, unlike its mint family relatives. It features distinctive pink to purple flowers and sharply toothed leaves.

Natural Aid for Anxiety, Heart Health, and Menstrual Relief

Known for its traditional medicinal uses, motherwort, or Leonurus cardiaca, has been a staple in herbal remedies for centuries. Nicholas Culpeper, a noted English herbalist, praised its ability to uplift spirits and support heart health.

Region:

Motherwort is native to Europe and Central Asia. It thrives in abandoned fields and along roadsides.

Ancient Uses:

- Culpeper highlighted Motherwort's effectiveness in alleviating "melancholy vapors" from the heart and enhancing cheerfulness.
- Traditionally, it was used to soothe anxiety, stress, and depression, and was believed to support heart palpitations and women's health, including regulating menstrual cycles and easing menopausal symptoms.

Modern research:

- Chinese motherwort extract may effectively prevent the growth and spread of breast cancer cells. (637)
- Motherwort herb extract has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties, with the potential to improve heart health and blood circulation. (638)
- Motherwort extracts promote lactoperoxidase enzyme activity, which may explain its anti-inflammatory properties.(639)

Side Effects:

Motherwort may cause stomach irritation, uterine bleeding, and increased sensitivity to the sun. Pregnant women should avoid it due to potential effects on uterine activity.

Parts used:

The aerial parts of the plant, primarily leaves and flowers

Dosage:

A typical dose is about 4.5 grams of dried herb daily, often divided into 2-3 doses. Motherwort can be taken as tea, tincture, or capsules as per individual needs. As with any herb, start with a lower dose to assess tolerance.

Fresh motherwort leaves

Synergies:

★★★★

Motherwort and Salmon oil

A new functional food combining salmon oil with motherwort oil extract in a ratio of 8:2 shows promising cardioprotective properties.(640)

Artemisia vulgaris

Mugwort

Mugwort is an aromatic perennial herb. It typically grows up to 1 to 2 meters tall with dark green leaves and reddish-purple stems. The plant blooms small, inconspicuous flowers during the late summer.

Aids Digestion, Eases Menstrual Cramps, and Enhances Concentration

Mugwort, often called the "mother of herbs," boasts a rich history in traditional medicine across various cultures. Praised for its diverse medicinal properties, it's a common herb in Chinese, European, and Hindu herbal practices. Dried mugwort leaves have been used traditionally as a reliable tinder for fires.

Region:

Found across temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere, including Europe, Asia, and North America.

Ancient Uses:

- In traditional Chinese medicine, mugwort was used for pain relief by burning its leaves, a therapy called moxibustion.
- European folklore held mugwort in high regard for protecting travelers and warding off evil spirits.
- In Hindu tradition, mugwort was incorporated in rituals and was believed to have spiritual cleansing properties.

Modern research:

- Mugwort has antioxidant, hepatoprotective, antispasmolytic, antinociceptive, estrogenic, cytotoxic, antibacterial, and antifungal effects, making it beneficial for various health conditions.(587)
- The aerial parts of Mugwort plant yield essential oils that have applications as antioxidant, antibacterial, antifungal, food flavouring, and insect repellent. (588)
- Mugwort and its active component dehydromatricarin A suppress allergic inflammatory responses, suggesting potential for treating allergic asthma.(589)

Side Effects:

While mugwort is generally safe, it may cause allergic reactions in some individuals, especially those allergic to the Asteraceae/Compositae family. Pregnant women should avoid mugwort, as it might cause miscarriage.

Parts used:

Leaves and roots

Preparations:

Mugwort can be prepared as a tea, used in tinctures, or even as a spice in culinary dishes. It is also available in capsule and extract form.

Mugwort leaves

Dosage:

For digestive aid and menstrual cramps, a tea made from 1-2 teaspoons of dried mugwort leaves steeped in hot water for 10-15 minutes is commonly used. For other uses, follow the manufacturer's instructions on extracts or capsules.

Synergies:

★★★★

Mugwort and Menthol

Applying a lotion containing mugwort and menthol directly to the skin relieves itching in severe burn wounds.(590)

Verbascum Thapsus

Mullein

This tall, fibrous wildflower can reach over 4 feet in height. It features large, soft leaves and yellow flowers, which bloom in its second year.

Alleviates Respiratory Issues and Soothes Skin Irritations

Mullein, known for its towering presence and soft leaves, has been a staple in herbal medicine for centuries. It's particularly valued for its ability to soothe the respiratory system and skin.

Region:

Mullein is commonly found in North America and Europe, thriving in meadows, roadsides, and pastures.

Ancient Uses:

- Historically, mullein has been used across various cultures for its healing properties. In traditional European medicine, it was a go-to remedy for respiratory ailments like bronchitis and asthma. Native Americans also utilized mullein for its anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic effects, often turning to it for treating coughs and lung disorders.

Modern research:

- Common mullein has been used for the treatment of inflammatory diseases, asthma, spasmodic coughs, diarrhea, and other pulmonary problems.(631)
- Mullein is used as a nutritional supplement and herbal tea, and its extract is often used to cure rheumatism, menstrual pains, and hemorrhoids.(632)
- A tincture of mullein herb has antioxidant, membrane-protective, and cardioprotective properties. It can also restore antioxidant system performance and reduce hepatocyte membrane permeability in animal models with adrenaline cardiomyopathy.(633)

Side Effects:

Though generally safe, some people might experience skin irritation when applying mullein topically. In rare cases, inhaling its fine hairs can irritate the respiratory tract.

Parts used:

Leaves and flowers

Mullein aerial parts

Dosage:

Mullein is commonly prepared as a tea or infusion. For respiratory issues, a tea made from 1-2 teaspoons of dried leaves or flowers steeped in 1 cup of hot water for 10-15 minutes is recommended, consumed 2-3 times daily. For topical applications, a poultice made from the leaves can be applied to the skin as needed.

Synergies:

★★★

Mullein and Amantadine

A laboratory study found that combining the medication amantadine with mullein increased antiviral activity against influenza.(634)

★★★★

Mullein and Linseed

Adding mullein extract to linseed oil boosts its phenolic content, enhancing antioxidant properties that safeguard against oxidative damage. This improvement increases stability and shelf life, making linseed oil a healthier and more reliable choice for consumption and various applications.(635)

★★★★

Mullein, Grapeseed, and Linseed

The addition of mullein flower extract to grapeseed oil and linseed oil (60 mg of extract/kg of oil) enhances the oxidative stability and antioxidant activity of both oils, thereby preserving their nutritive value and extending shelf life.(636)

Brassica juncea

Mustard

Mustard is an annual plant known for its hardy and rapid growth. It features bright yellow flowers and deeply lobed leaves. Its small, black seeds have a sharp, pungent flavor.

Digestive, Respiratory, and Inflammation Relief

Mustard, a plant with a long-standing history in traditional medicine, is renowned for its multiple uses. Beyond being an important source of edible oil and a culinary ingredient, mustard's leaves, seeds, and flowers have been utilized for their medicinal properties.

Region:

Native to the Indian subcontinent and parts of western Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Historically, mustard has been a go-to remedy for a variety of ailments. In the Middle Ages, it was commonly used for treating skin infections and boils. Traditional Chinese medicine employs mustard to treat colds, sore throats, relieve congestion, improve circulation, and as a diuretic. Its effectiveness in easing arthritis and joint pain is also well documented in ancient practices.

Modern research:

- Mustard oil massage is commonly used for promotion of strength, maintenance of health, and provision of warmth in newborns.(590)
- Their leaves contain significant amounts of calcium, copper, and vitamins C, A, and K, while their seeds are particularly rich in fiber, selenium, magnesium, and manganese.(591)
- Mustard seeds can be soaked and used to make mustard paste. Mustard paste, a low calorie condiment, is a simple way to add a dash of iron, calcium, selenium, and phosphorus to your meals.(592)
- Mustard is also rich in carotenoids, isorhamnetin, and kaempferol. Research links these flavonoid antioxidants to protection from conditions like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and perhaps even some types of cancer.(593)

Side Effects:

While generally safe, mustard can cause skin irritation or allergic reactions in some individuals, especially when applied topically. Ingesting large amounts of mustard seeds may lead to gastrointestinal upset.

Parts used:

Seeds and leaves

Mustard in various forms

Dosage:

Mustard is typically used in culinary amounts for general health benefits. For specific medicinal uses, it's advised to consult with a healthcare professional for appropriate dosages. Mustard oil or paste can be applied topically, but with caution due to potential skin irritation.

Synergies:

★★★★

Mustard and Indian sandalwood

Indian sandalwood essential oil can be combined with mustard oil in a ratio of 1:2 and applied to the skin to treat acne and pimples.(594)

★★★★

Mustard and Milk

Mustard seeds can be steeped in warm milk, whisked into salad dressings, ground, or sprinkled into warm meals.(595)

★★★★

Mustard, Cumin, and Cardamom

Combination of cumin, cardamom, and mustard is the foundation of many Indian spice blends. The earthiness of cumin, the citrusy note of coriander, and the pungency of mustard seeds create a harmonious flavour profile and synergistic anti-oxidant, and antibacterial properties.(596)

To maximize mustard seeds' anti-cancer benefits, crush them and let them sit for about 10 minutes before cooking. This process activates enzymes that convert glucosinolates into isothiocyanates, compounds known for their potential anti-cancer properties.

Commiphora myrrha

Myrrh

Myrrh is a spiny tree that grows up to 5 m tall with a short, thick trunk and two layers of bark. The resin extracted from its bark coagulates quickly, ranging in color from clear to opaque and darkening with age.

Anti-inflammatory and Anticancer Properties

Known as a treasured resin of the Commiphora myrrha tree, myrrh holds a medicinal repute for battling cancers, coughs, sepsis, and skin infections. A hallowed guest in sacred rituals, today it finds itself adding astringency to mouthwashes and fragrance to daily life.

Region:

Commiphora myrrha is a tree native to Africa (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Northeast Kenya, and Somalia) and the Arabian Peninsula (Oman, Yemen).

Ancient Uses:

- Egyptians used myrrh in religious ceremonies. They saw it as the tears of their god Horus and imported large amounts around 3000 BCE. They included it in their incense and in skin preparations to promote a youthful complexion and protect their skin from dry, harsh conditions and reduce wrinkles.
- African, Middle Eastern, and Chinese traditional medicine combined myrrh with other ingredients to treat wounds, sepsis, and intestinal worms. Ancient Sumerian inscriptions revealed that myrrh was a topical treatment for dental problems.
- In Greek medicine, Dioscorides prescribed myrrh for coughs, eye, mouth, and teeth infections. Romans used it in Mendesium, a liniment for muscle pain, and Murra, a perfume used as a cleanser and hair tonic.
- Myrrh held sacred significance for both Hebrews and the Roman Catholic Church, symbolizing penitence, purification, and sacrifice. It was among the Magi's three gifts to Jesus at his birth and offered during his crucifixion as pain relief.

Modern research:

- Myrrh has anti-inflammatory properties and other beneficial compounds that may serve as cost-effective treatments for autoimmune diseases.(279)
- Myrrh's methanolic extract has anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory wound-healing effects, likely due to its impact on macrophage activity for stronger immunity. These findings also suggest that myrrh may be viable for treating wounds and cancer.(280)
- Myrrh has been found to have potential anti-inflammatory properties, as evidenced by its inhibitory activity of interleukin 6 (IL-6) and its ability to regulate cell migration.(281)

Side Effects:

When taken orally, myrrh is typically safe in small, food-like quantities, though it may result in diarrhea. However, in larger doses exceeding 2-4 grams, it can potentially lead to kidney irritation and heart rate alterations, making it unsafe. It is generally safe for skin application or bath dilution for the majority, although some individuals might experience skin rashes.

Parts used:

The resin

Preparations:

Herbal companies sell Myrrh as essential oils, powders, and resin. It can be burned, compounded, and used to make incense, medicinal tinctures, and perfume.

Myrrh resin in various forms

Dosage:

A suitable myrrh powder dosage ranges from 0.5 to 1 gram. To prepare myrrh tea, mix 1-2 teaspoons of the powder with a cup of boiling water, which you can drink three times a day. Alternatively, myrrh tincture can be taken in doses of 1-4 ml up to three times daily.

Synergies:

★★★

Myrrh, Chamomile, and Coffee

The combination of myrrh, chamomile flowers, and coffee charcoal has shown potential for treatment of ulcerative colitis.(282)

★★★

Myrrh and Boswellia

Boswellia and myrrh essential oils show promise in combating several dangerous pathogens when combined together.(283)

Azadirachta indica

Neem

A tall evergreen tree with wide-spread branches bearing compound leaves and clusters of white, fragrant flowers.

Antimicrobial and Oral Health Promoter

Neem is an ancient, revered cornerstone of Ayurvedic medicine, known as the 'Village Pharmacy' for its extensive medicinal use. This tree, in its entirety, exudes an air of healing and protection, a testament to thousands of years of traditional use and recent scientific validation.

Region:

Neem, a hardy, drought-resistant tree, is a native of the Indian subcontinent. It has now spread across various tropical and subtropical regions worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- In the annals of Ayurveda, Neem has been a panacea, known to cleanse, heal, and protect. It was used for a plethora of conditions, from skin diseases and diabetes to malaria and dental hygiene, embodying the essence of holistic wellness.
- Ancient traditional medicine employed neem for its potent antibacterial properties. It was used to treat various bacterial infections, including skin infections, wounds, and urinary tract infections.
- Neem was traditionally used as a natural remedy for dental health. Twigs from the neem tree were used as toothbrushes, and neem-based powders and oils were applied to gums and teeth to promote oral hygiene and prevent dental issues.
- The bitter taste of neem made it a popular traditional remedy for digestive disorders. It was used to alleviate indigestion, flatulence, and intestinal parasites.
- Neem's antipyretic properties made it useful for managing fever in ancient traditional medicine. It was believed to help reduce fever and alleviate associated symptoms.

Modern research:

- Extracts from Neem leaves possess a powerful antimicrobial effect and could be used to treat various infectious diseases.(507)
- High doses of neem leaf ethanolic extract can effectively reduce aortic wall thickening and luminal narrowing in white rats, suggesting its potential as an alternative medicine for cardiovascular disease.(508)
- Neem has demonstrated preventive and therapeutic potential against oral cancer. (509)

Parts used:

Leaves, bark, seeds, flowers, and twigs

Preparations:

- Oil: Extracted mainly from the seeds, used topically for skin conditions.
- Tea: An infusion of leaves can be prepared and used for its numerous health benefits. One cup of Neem tea can be consumed 1-2 times per day.
- Powder: Crushed leaves and bark can be used in this form for both internal and external use.
- Toothpaste and Mouthwash: Neem twigs have been traditionally used for brushing teeth, now adapted into modern oral care products.

Neem leaves, fruits, and twigs

Synergies:

★★★★

Neem, Onion, Green tea, and Turmeric

Neem, onion, green tea, and turmeric extracts show antibacterial activity against disease-causing microorganisms.(510)

★★★★

Neem, Aloe vera, and Turmeric

Aloe vera, turmeric, and neem offer effective psoriasis treatment alternatives to chemical agents, with potential benefits for sensitive skin.(511)

★★★

Neem and Antibiotics

Neem extract combined with conventional antibiotics (namely Ciprofloxacin, Cefixime, Chloramphenicol, Ampicillin, Sulfamethoxazole, Tetracycline and Ofloxacin) enables lower dosages without sacrificing effectiveness. (512)

Urtica dioica

Nettle

Stinging nettle is a perennial plant that grows up to 2 meters (6 feet) tall. It has hairy, serrated leaves and small greenish flowers.

Allergy Relief and Joint Pain Alleviation

Named for its notorious sting, behind stinging nettle's tiny sting-loaded hairs lies a therapeutic gem that eases joint pain, reduces inflammation, and tackles allergies. Plus, it's a stealthy nutrient provider, rich in vitamins A and C, iron, and calcium.

Region:

Stinging nettle is native to Europe, Asia, and North America and can be found in many temperate regions worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Nettle has a long history of use that dates back to the Bronze Age, around 3000 BCE - 1200 BCE. Historical records reveal that nettle's stinging properties between 58 and 45 BCE helped Julius Caesar's troops stay alert and awake during the night.
- Apart from its application in herbal supplements, nettle has traditionally been used to make textiles. It can be transformed into various textures, from rough to silky, similar to flax. Scottish households in the 16th and 17th centuries commonly used nettle fabric as a household textile.
- During the First and Second World Wars, nettle fiber was used as a substitute for cotton when cotton was unavailable. Due to its durable fibers, nettle is ideal for survival, as it can be used to create natural cordage, build a shelter, start a fire, and more.
- Allergies: Stinging nettle has reduced allergy symptoms such as sneezing, itching, and runny nose.
- Anemia: Stinging nettle is a good source of iron and can help treat anemia.
- Arthritis: Stinging nettle has been used to alleviate joint pain and reduce inflammation associated with arthritis.

Modern research:

- Stinging nettle is a high-protein, low-calorie source of essential nutrients, minerals, and vitamins, particularly beneficial for vegetarian, diabetic, and specialized diets.(284)
- Recent research suggests that nettle could be used for chemoprevention, diabetes, benign prostatic hyperplasia, and other urologic diseases. (285)
- Prolonged nettle leaf extract supplementation reduces blood pressure and oxidative stress in a rat model of essential hypertension, with potential benefits for treating hypertension.(286)

Parts used:

Leaves and roots

Preparations:

Stinging nettle can be consumed by making a tea with dried leaves, taking it orally as a supplement in capsule or tincture form, or by applying it topically in the form of a cream or oil. To prepare nettle tea, one needs to steep 1-2 teaspoons of dried nettle leaves in hot water for 5-10 minutes.

Dosage:

It is safe to drink up to three cups of nettle tea daily. Oral supplements are available in different forms and strengths, and the recommended dosage varies accordingly. For topical use, cream or oil can be applied to the skin as needed, with up to four daily applications considered safe.

Nettle branch and root

Synergies:

★★★★★

Nettle, Olive, Dandelion, Turmeric, and Milk thistle

A combination of nettle leaf, olive leaf, dandelion, turmeric, and milk thistle 30 minutes before breakfast for 5 months significantly reduced psoriasis symptoms.(287)

Steep nettle leaves for at least 10 minutes in hot water to extract the maximum amount of beneficial compounds like vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

Myristica fragrans

Nutmeg

Digestive Health and Pain Relief

Nutmeg is a tropical evergreen tree that can grow up to 20 meters (65 feet) tall. It has dark green leaves and small yellow flowers and produces a fruit known as the nutmeg apple. The fruit's seed is the source of the spice nutmeg, while the outer layer is the source of the spice mace.

Nutmeg has been used for centuries in traditional medicine and as a spice in cooking. It is known for its warm, spicy aroma and flavor and has been used to treat indigestion, nausea, and pain relief. It is also a rich source of essential oils and compounds with anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and antioxidant properties.

Region:

Nutmeg is native to the Banda Islands of Indonesia but is now widely cultivated in other tropical regions such as the Caribbean, Sri Lanka, and India.

Ancient Uses:

- The Arabs used nutmeg as medicine in the first century A.D. Arab physicians used the spice for various digestive ailments involving the mouth, intestines, liver, and spleen. It was also used to lighten freckles and skin blemishes. Later, Arab physicians became more particular in using nutmeg for therapeutic purposes. It was also used to cure kidney and lymphatic ailments by the 11th century. It was introduced to the Venetians by Arab traders, who, in turn, brought the coveted spice to Europe.
- Nutmeg is mentioned in the Vedas or foundational holy books of Hinduism. In a book he published in 1860, the German botanist K.F.P. von Martius wrote about how the Hindus used nutmeg for cold fevers, foul breath, headaches, intestinal weakness, and nerve fevers. The Hindus also believed nutmeg created warmth and encouraged digestion. It was used to ease coughing and, in some instances, as a sedative.
- Most medieval Europeans used nutmeg for the same medicinal purposes that the Arabs and Indians did, particularly for digestive problems. They also believed it would keep the plague away.
- Nutmeg has been traditionally used to alleviate digestive issues.
- Nutmeg has been used in traditional medicine to improve mood and relieve anxiety and stress.
- Nutmeg has been used as a pain reliever for headaches and toothaches.

Modern research:

- Nutmeg extract may help preserve muscle mass in older adults, potentially preventing age-related muscle wasting. (289)
- Nutmeg's antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties could be beneficial in preventing various oxidative stress and inflammatory-related conditions. (290)
- The essential oil derived from nutmeg can be used in the pharmaceutical, chemical, and food industries as an all-natural antimicrobial and cleaning agent.(291)

Side Effects:

Nutmeg may be harmful in quantities of 120 mg or higher per day. Long-term high-dose use has been linked to hallucinations and severe mental adverse effects.

Parts used:

Nutmeg seed

Preparations:

Nutmeg can be used whole or ground as a spice in cooking or taken orally as a supplement in capsule or tincture form. One of the best ways to consume nutmeg is to take one to two pinches of nutmeg powder and swallow it with honey, preferably after meals.

Nutmeg, mace, and shell

Dosage:

Experts recommend consuming only 1-2 pinches of nutmeg powder once or twice a day.

Synergies:

★★★★

Nutmeg and Clove

The combination of clove and nutmeg extracts demonstrated a potential synergistic effect in enhancing the sexual behavior of males.(292)

Nutmeg can have psychoactive effects and should be used in very small amounts — no more than a pinch in your recipes to avoid any adverse effects.

Olea europaea

Olive Oil

Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) is derived from the first pressing of olives, yielding the highest quality oil with a distinct taste and aroma. It's rich in antioxidants, monounsaturated fats, and has a low acidity level below 0.8%

Boosts Heart Health and Reduces Inflammation

Esteemed in Mediterranean cultures for millennia, extra virgin olive oil was a symbol of wealth and health in ancient Greece and Rome. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, prescribed it for over 60 different ailments, demonstrating its importance in traditional medicine. Today, EVOO is renowned for its heart-healthy properties and as a culinary staple across the globe.

Region:

Originally from the Mediterranean Basin, olive oil is now produced in various regions with similar climates, including parts of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East.

Ancient Uses:

- Cardiovascular Companion: Ancient Greeks used olive oil to strengthen the cardiovascular system and increase longevity.
- Skin Elixir: EVOO has been used for centuries as a natural moisturizer and protectant against harsh environmental elements.
- Digestive Aid: The Romans valued olive oil for its ability to aid digestion and soothe stomach ailments.
- Anti-Inflammatory Agent: Historical records show that olive oil was applied to reduce inflammation and relieve pain, a practice still relevant today.

Modern research:

- Daily consumption of EVOO provides ben cardioprotective, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antitumor benefits, as well as acting as a regulator of intestinal microbiota.(778)
- Consumption of the recommended daily amount of extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) would cover about 50% of the recommended daily allowance of tocopherols and the polyphenol intake recommended by the European Food Safety Authority. (779)
- EVOO has cardioprotective, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, and anticancer properties due to unsaturated fatty acids and minor compounds like tocopherols. (780)

Side Effects:

While generally safe, excessive consumption of olive oil can lead to digestive issues like diarrhea. Individuals with gallbladder problems or high cholesterol should consult a doctor before increasing olive oil in their diet.

Parts used:

Cold-pressed oil extracted from the fruit of the olive tree

Olive oil

Preparations:

EVOO can be used in cooking, as a salad dressing, or in marinades to enhance flavor and nutritional value. It can also be applied topically as a natural skin moisturizer or used to make homemade hair masks. Additionally, olive oil is available as a supplement in capsule form.

Dosage:

- Oral: Incorporate 1-2 tablespoons of EVOO into your daily diet. Use it in salad dressings, for light sautéing, or as a dip for bread.
- Topical: Apply a small amount of EVOO to the skin or hair as needed for moisturizing. For hair care, leave it in for 30 minutes before washing for a deep conditioning effect.

Synergies:

★★★★

EVOO and Lemon juice

Prepare ladolemono sauce by combining EVOO and lemon juice in a ratio of 3:1 and mixing it thoroughly. Use this mixture as a sauce with grilled fish or apply it as a marinade.(781)

★★★

EVOO with other vegetables

The fats from EVOO allow for the better absorption of nutrients from red, orange, and green fruits and vegetables, allowing for synergistic benefits in salads and similar dishes.(782)

Use EVOO for cold dishes or low-heat cooking. This preserves its antioxidants and flavor. Store it in a cool, dark place and choose dark bottles to protect it from light.

Allium cepa

Onion

Onion is a bulbous plant known for its strong flavor and pungent aroma. This vegetable is a staple in cuisines worldwide and is valued for its versatile use in cooking as well as its numerous health benefits.

Natural Ally for Heart Health and Infection Resistance

Revered since ancient times, onions were used by the Egyptians both as a culinary ingredient and a symbol of eternity in their burial rituals. In traditional medicine across various cultures, onions have been used to combat colds, improve heart health, and reduce inflammation.

Region:

Onions are cultivated globally, with China, India, and the United States being the largest producers. They thrive in a wide range of climates but prefer mild to cool weather for optimal growth.

Ancient Uses:

- Respiratory Relief: Onions have been used as a traditional remedy for respiratory issues like coughs and colds.
- Cardiovascular Support: Ancient healers recommended onions for promoting heart health, owing to their ability to regulate blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- Antimicrobial Agent: Onions have been used for their antimicrobial properties, helping to prevent infections.

Modern research:

- Onion consumption reduces lipids in blood plasma by 15% and improves oxidative status in blood serum in both male and female animal models consuming a high fat diet.(752)
- Onions are a versatile crop with anticarcinogenic properties, antiplatelet activity, and antithrombotic effects due to their rich content of flavonoids and sulfur amino acids.(753)
- Onions contain quercetin, which protects against cataracts, cardiovascular disease, and cancer, as well as organosulfur compounds that lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. (754)
- Raw onion consumption may help prevent platelet-mediated cardiovascular disorders.(755)
- Tearless onions significantly reduce platelet aggregation and may help reduce weight gain. (756)
- Onions have anticancer, antidiabetic, antioxidant, antiplatelet, antihypertensive, and antidepressant effects, as well as neuroprotective, anti-inflammatory, and antiparasitic effects.(757)

Side Effects:

Consuming onions is generally safe, but they can cause heartburn, allergic reactions, and gastrointestinal discomfort in some people. Individuals with a known allergy to onions should avoid them.

Parts used:

The bulb of the onion is the most commonly used part, either consumed raw or cooked in various dishes.

Preparations:

Onions can be eaten raw in salads, sandwiches, and dressings, or cooked in a variety of dishes. They can also be pickled, caramelized, or used to make onion juice, which is believed to have medicinal benefits.

Dosage:

Dietary: There is no specific dosage for onions as they are commonly consumed as part of a regular diet. However, incorporating one medium-sized onion into daily meals can contribute to its health benefits.

Whole and sliced onions

Synergies:

★★★

Onion and Tomato

Eating onions with tomatoes can be a very good combination, as tomatoes have a compound called lycopene, which is best absorbed in the body with the help of onions. (758)

★★★★

Onion and Lemon juice

Onions are good for our gut health if combined with lemon juice.(759)

Origanum vulgare

Oregano

Oregano is a perennial herb with oval-shaped leaves and small purple or white flowers. It grows up to 60 cm (2 feet) tall and has a strong, pungent aroma.

Digestive Aid and Antioxidant Powerhouse

Oregano is popular in Mediterranean cuisine. This aromatic herb brings pizzas, pastas, and grilled meats to life while also treating various ailments. It's rich in antioxidants, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and antiviral properties.

Region:

Oregano is native to the Mediterranean region, but it is now widely cultivated around the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Oregano's origin can be traced to Greece, where it was first used. According to Greek mythology, Aphrodite created it as a symbol of joy and planted it in her garden.
- The word "oregano" comes from the Greek "oros" (mountain) and "ganos" (joy), representing "joy of the mountains."
- Oregano was embraced by the Romans for its flavor and ease of cultivation, spreading its use throughout Europe and Northern Africa.
- In the Middle Ages, it had medicinal uses, like relieving coughs, indigestion, and rheumatism.
- In the Elizabethan era, oregano was used in spells for happiness, tranquility, luck, health, protection, and letting go of a loved one. People would wear it while sleeping to have psychic dreams.
- The herb also made its way to China, where it was believed to help with fever, vomiting, and upset stomach. Oregano was not widely used in the United States until after World War II when soldiers discovered the herb and brought it back.
- Oregano has been used to treat digestive issues such as bloating, indigestion, and diarrhea.
- Oregano has been used topically to treat acne and dandruff.

Modern research:

- Oregano has antimicrobial and antioxidant properties, and potential benefits for cardiovascular health, the nervous system, and reducing inflammation.(293)
- Oregano's flavonoids and phenolic acids show potential antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-cancer health benefits, with long-term consumption linked to a decreased risk of various chronic diseases.(294)
- Oregano oil can stop or prevent the HIV-1 virus from entering the body, potentially slowing disease progression and reducing resistance development.(295)

Side Effects:

Mild side effects include stomach upset.

Parts used:

Leaves

Preparations:

Oregano can be consumed fresh or dried as a culinary herb, taken orally as a supplement in capsule or tincture form, or applied topically as an essential oil.

Dosage:

Take up to 2 tbsp fresh or 1 tsp dried oregano daily. When using oregano essential oil on skin, dilute with a carrier oil (1-2 drops per tsp), apply topically up to twice daily.

Oregano in various forms

Synergies:

★★★

Oregano, Clove, and Cinnamon

A blend of clove, oregano, and cinnamon essential oils effectively eliminates and inhibits the growth of bacteria in food, showcasing their potential as natural food preservatives.(296)

★★★

Oregano and Cranberry

Combining a few drops of oregano essential oil and coconut oil with cranberry juice significantly enhances its ability to eradicate bacteria that cause urinary tract infections.(297)

★★★

Oregano and Thyme

A combination of oregano and thyme essential oils shows synergistic antibacterial activity and may be diluted and applied topically to prevent bacterial infections.(298)

Passiflora incarnata

Passionflower

Anxiety Relief and Sleep Aid

Passionflower is a vine with delicate, purple, pink, or white flowers and edible fruits. The leaves are divided into five lobes and have a pointed tip.

Passionflower is a popular herb in indigenous American traditional medicine, where it is used to treat various conditions, including anxiety, insomnia, and pain. It is believed to have analgesic, antispasmodic, and sedative properties. Passionflower is also a natural remedy for digestive issues and helps reduce menopausal symptoms.

Region:

Passionflower is native to the Americas but is now cultivated in many parts of the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Native American tribes of the Southeast used passionflower both medicinally and as nourishment. The Cherokee boiled and fried the young shoots, blending them with other culinary greens, and used the plant externally as a poultice.
- Spanish missionaries and other European settlers promoted passionflower as a medical herb throughout their migrations. By the 18th century, it had gained such recognition that botanists began singing the praises of passionflower worldwide.
- Passionflower has been traditionally used to help reduce anxiety and promote a sense of calm and relaxation, which makes it an effective natural sleep aid that improves sleep duration and quality.
- Passionflower has been used to treat digestive issues such as indigestion, bloating, and anxiety-related diarrhea.
- Menopausal symptoms: Passionflower has been used to help reduce hot flashes, night sweats, and other menopausal symptoms.
- Passionflower has been used to help alleviate pain associated with conditions such as headaches, muscle spasms, and menstrual cramps.

Modern research:

- The butanolic extract from passionflower has the ability to reduce symptoms related to Parkinson's disease and dementia, which may be due to its antioxidant properties.(299)
- Passionflower may be an effective treatment for neuropsychiatric conditions, with studies showing reduced anxiety levels in those who took it.(300)
- Passionflower was one of the effective alternative treatments for anxiety and depression, with a low risk of side effects. It could also benefit cancer patients looking to reduce the amount of medication they take and related side effects.(301)

Side Effects:

Passionflower is safe for flavoring meals and tea for a week or as medicine for up to 8 weeks but may cause dizziness and sleepiness. Avoid during pregnancy due to the risk of premature labor and uterine complications.

Parts used:

Flowers, leaves, and stems

Preparations:

Passionflower can be consumed as a tea, taken orally as a supplement in capsule or tincture form, or applied topically as an essential oil.

Dosage:

For passionflower tea, drink 1-2 cups daily. When using passionflower oil, dilute 1-2 drops with carrier oil per teaspoon; you can apply topically up to twice daily.

Dried passionflower parts

Synergies:

★★★

Passionflower and Lemon balm

Combining passionflower and lemon balm essential oils in diffuser has shown potential in reducing hypomanic or manic symptoms.(302)

★★★

Passionflower and St. John's wort

Using a small amount of St. John's wort extract along with passionflower extract, can potentially have positive effects in treating depression.(303)

For a calming effect, steep passionflower in hot, not boiling, water to preserve its delicate flavonoids that contribute to its sedative properties.

Mentha piperita

Peppermint

Digestive Relief and Headache Alleviator

Peppermint is a perennial herb that grows up to 90 cm (35 inches) tall. It has square-shaped stems and green, serrated leaves with a reddish vein running through the center. It produces small, purple, or white flowers on spikes.

Peppermint is a popular herb known for its refreshing and invigorating aroma. It has a history of medicinal use, dating back to ancient civilizations in Egypt and Greece. Peppermint is used to aid digestion, alleviate headaches, and freshen breath. The name "peppermint" comes from the Latin words "mentha," meaning mint, and "piperita," meaning pepper. Peppermint is often used in breath fresheners and toothpaste.

Region:

Peppermint is native to Europe and Asia but is now cultivated in many regions worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Peppermint usage dates back to 1500 B.C., with 3,000-year-old dried leaves found in Egyptian pyramids.
- The Ebers Papyrus from 1550 B.C. listed mint as a remedy for stomach pains, and it was highly valued in ancient Egypt, even used as a form of currency.
- AncientGreeks had conflicting opinions on peppermint – scholars thought it discouraged procreation, while it was prohibited for soldiers to consume to maintain discipline.
- Ancient Romans used peppermint to add flavor dishes, sauces, and wine, and it was also used decoratively for festive crowns.
- The Bible mentions mint in Luke 11:39 as one of the herbs the Pharisees tithed, and ancient Hebrews appreciated its pleasant scent, using it to cover synagogue floors during special occasions.
- In the Middle Ages, monks used it to polish teeth, and cheese makers discovered its ability to keep rodents away from storerooms.
- It was mentioned in the Icelandic Pharmacopoeias in 1240 AD as an herbal remedy.
- Peppermint has a natural calming effect on the digestive system.
- Peppermint has been used to alleviate headaches and tension.

Modern research:

- Peppermint was found to have positive effects on reducing elevated lipid levels caused by fructose and also had strong antioxidant capabilities, according to a 2011 study.(304)
- Peppermint has potential analgesic effects in both central and peripheral parts of the body. (305)
- A 2016 study found that extracts and essential oils from peppermint show strong antimicrobial properties, making it a potential source of natural antibiotics.(306)

Side Effects:

Peppermint consumption can cause dry mouth, heartburn, nausea, and vomiting. Avoid applying peppermint to infants' or young children's face or chest to prevent breathing problems.

Parts used:

Leaves

Dosage:

- Peppermint oil: Adults can take 270 to 1350 mg orally per day for up to 4 weeks. For topical application, dilute it with carrier oil and use up to thrice daily. It can also be found in gels, creams, essential oils, and rinses.
- For peppermint in tea, have no more than 3 cups daily.

Peppermint oil

Synergies:

★★★

Peppermint, Eucalyptus, and Ethanol

The combination of peppermint oil, eucalyptus oil, and ethanol can enhance cognitive performance (such as working memory and problem-solving), induce muscle relaxation, and promote mental relaxation.(307)

★★★

Peppermint and White tea

White tea combined with peppermint exhibits antibacterial and anti-inflammatory effects.(308)

★★★★

Peppermint and Sweet basil

Mixing Peppermint and sweet basil essential oils in an equal amount was found to enhance the antifungal properties of basil oil.(309)

Ananas comosus

Pineapple

The pineapple plant has long, spiky leaves and sweet, juicy fruit. Pineapple is a source of bromelain, a group of enzymes found in the plant's stem and fruit.

Anti-Inflammatory and Digestive Aid

Pineapple, a tasty fruit packed with vitamins and minerals like vitamin C, manganese, and bromelain, is renowned for its centuries-old use in traditional medicine. It's prized for its anti-inflammatory and digestive properties, making it a go-to remedy for various health issues. Additionally, bromelain is thought to enhance the immune system and promote wound healing.

Region:

Pineapple is believed to have originated in the Brazilian rainforests. The native tribes in this area harvested pineapples and spread them all over Central and South America. Pineapple has become popular worldwide and is grown in tropical regions.

Ancient Uses:

- Pineapple is believed to have originated in South America, specifically in Brazil. After its introduction to Europe, Christopher Columbus and his crew imported it and began growing it in greenhouses. It eventually became a luxury item primarily enjoyed by the wealthy and the elite.
- Bromelain is a mixture of enzymes found exclusively in pineapples, mainly in the fruit and stems. These enzymes have been extensively researched for their potential benefits. While bromelain was only identified in 1891, pineapple has been used medicinally by tribal communities for centuries. It was used to tenderize meat, promote wound healing, and aid digestion, among other uses.
- Bromelain has been used to treat wounds and enhance the absorption of antibiotics. It also relieves cardiovascular disorders, diarrhea, and osteoarthritis.
- Pineapple has been traditionally used to boost the immune system and treat infections. This is believed to be due to pineapple's high vitamin C content.
- Pineapple has been used to reduce inflammation in the joints.
- Pineapple has been used to speed up healing and reduce swelling.

Modern Research:

- Bromelain, naturally present in pineapple stems, can be used to provide neuroprotection for the brain and to symptoms associated with several neurodegenerative diseases.(310)
- The presence of bromelain and its associated phytochemicals such as Vitamin C and flavonoids found in pineapple extract demonstrated an antibacterial effect.(311)
- Pineapple consumption reduces cardiac oxidative stress and inflammation in high cholesterol diet-fed animal models, which means that it has potential heart health benefits.(312)

Side Effects:

Drinking unripe pineapple juice can cause intense vomiting. Bromelain is generally safe but can lead to diarrhea, nausea, skin rash, and vomiting. Eating a large amount of pineapple can also cause swelling of the mouth and cheeks.

Parts used:

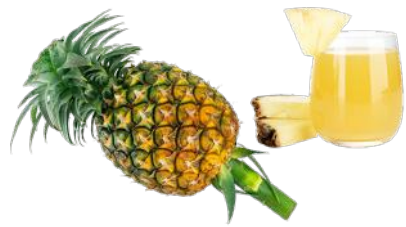
Stem and fruit

Preparations:

Pineapple can be consumed fresh. Bromelain supplements are available in capsule, cream, powder, and tincture form.

Dosage:

Bromelain has been safely administered in doses of up to 240 mg daily for one year. Adults have been given 40-400 mg daily, orally, and for a maximum of 13 months.



Pineapple fruit and juice

Synergies:

★★★★

Pineapple and Boswellia

Taking a supplement containing boswellia and bromelain can provide a safe means of alleviating pain, joint stiffness, and physical disability in people with different forms of osteoarthritis.(313)

Plantago major

Plantain

Plantain is a perennial herb with broad, oval-shaped leaves that grow up to 30 cm (12 inches) long. It produces small, green flowers on a spike that rises from the center of the plant.

Wound Healing and Respiratory Soother

Plantain has a long history of medicinal use, dating back to ancient civilizations in Europe and Asia. It is known for its astringent, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties and is used to treat various skin conditions and wounds. It is also used to alleviate digestive and respiratory issues. The name "plantain" comes from the Latin word "plantago," which means "sole of the foot."

Region:

Plantain is native to Europe and Asia but is now found throughout the world, often in areas with disturbed soil.

Ancient Uses:

- Plantain was once regarded as a sacred herb. It is indigenous to North America, Asia, and Europe. For thousands of years, plantain leaves were used to treat heart ailments, respiratory, stomach, and urinary problems, rheumatism, skin irritations, sore muscles, and sore throats.
- Native Americans used plantain leaves to cure fever and wounds, as well as dog, insect, and snake bites. The medicinal characteristics of plantain are found in its wide, ribbed leaves, which contain a soothing, mucilaginous liquid. A remedy still in use today is to chew on a plantain leaf to create a simple poultice for minor wounds, skin irritations, and stings. The benefit comes not just from the leaf but also from human saliva, which includes antimicrobial elements that help in the restoration of damaged tissues.
- Plantain leaves can be steeped in oil and used to treat conditions like cradle cap or diaper rash.
- In southern Europe, plantain was used to treat scorpion stings and snake bites, which led to its folk names "snake plant" and "serpent tongue." Farmers also used plantain to heal severe cuts caused by scythes and sickles during the harvest season.
- Plantain has been traditionally used to treat diarrhea and indigestion.
- Plantain has been used to treat bronchitis, asthma, and allergies.
- Plantain has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that make it effective in treating various skin conditions, including eczema, poison ivy, and rashes.
- Plantain's astringent properties have been used topromote healing and stop bleeding.

Modern research:

- Plantain preparations have demonstrated potential for treating bleeding gums, viral diseases, and other ailments. (314)
- A 2012 study indicates that plantain leaves possess healing properties, as demonstrated by water and ethanol-based extracts.(315)

Side Effects:

When taken orally for 8-12 weeks, plantain is considered safe. Meanwhile, when applied topically to the skin, plantain cream is safe for up to 2 weeks. Nevertheless, it may trigger allergic skin reactions in some individuals.

Parts used:

Leaves, roots, and seeds

Preparations:

Plantain can be consumed orally as a capsule, extract, or tea. It can also be applied topically as an infusion or poultice. Plantain can also be eaten as is (it must be cooked first).

Plantain poultice

Dosage:

The most common way that adults have used plantain seed is by orally ingesting doses of 1000-1200 mg, 2-3 times per day, for 8-12 weeks. In addition to being consumed, plantain is also used in creams and mouthwashes.

Various plantain preparations

Punica granatum

Pomegranate

The pomegranate is a fruit-bearing deciduous shrub with glossy, leathery leaves and bright red flowers. It can grow up to 5-8 meters (16-26 feet) tall. The fruit is round, with a thick, inedible skin and hundreds of edible seeds known as arils.

Boosts Heart Health and Fights Inflammation

Esteemed in ancient cultures, from the lavish feasts of Persian kings to the lush gardens of Babylon, the pomegranate has been a symbol of prosperity and health. Its name derives from the Latin words "pomum" (apple) and "granatum" (seeded), reflecting its unique appearance. Today, pomegranate is celebrated for its potent antioxidant properties and health benefits.

Region:

Native to the region extending from Iran to northern India, pomegranates have been cultivated throughout the Mediterranean region since ancient times. They thrive in semi-arid regions with mild winters and hot summers.

Ancient Uses:

- Heart Protector: Ancient Ayurvedic medicine used pomegranate to strengthen the heart and improve blood circulation.
- Inflammation Fighter: Historical texts from Greece show that pomegranate was used to reduce inflammation and treat arthritis.
- Digestive Aid: In ancient Egypt, pomegranates were used to combat digestive disorders and to expel tapeworms.
- Immunity Booster: Traditionally, pomegranate juice was consumed to boost immunity and fight against common infections.
- Fertility Enhancer: In Persian culture, pomegranate was regarded as a symbol of fertility and was used in various rituals and remedies to aid conception.

Modern research:

- Pomegranate juice consumption significantly reduces both systolic and diastolic blood pressure.(703)
- Pomegranate juice shows potential as an anti-inflammatory agent for chronic inflammatory diseases like inflammatory bowel disease, rheumatoid arthritis, metabolic disorders, and cardiovascular disorders.(704)
- Pomegranate fruits, seeds, and peels show potential for managing health by combating the negative effects of free radicals and by modulating enzymes linked to liver and heart disease development and progression.(705)
- Pomegranates might be useful in treating prostate cancer, skin cancer, osteoarthritis, and diabetes, as well as helping prevent heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes.(706)

Side Effects:

Pomegranate is generally safe, but its juice may interact with certain medications, like blood thinners and ACE inhibitors. Excessive consumption can cause digestive upset. Allergic reactions are rare but possible.

Parts used:

Fruit, juice, peel, and seeds

Preparations:

Pomegranate can be consumed fresh, as juice, or in extract form. The seeds and juice are added to salads, desserts, and smoothies. The peel is dried and used in tea or powdered for supplements. Look for recipes in this book to incorporate pomegranate into your diet creatively.

Dosage:

- Oral: Drink 8-12 oz of pomegranate juice daily for heart health and antioxidant benefits. For digestive issues, consume half a cup of pomegranate seeds with meals.
- Topical: For skin inflammation, apply pomegranate seed oil directly to the affected area, or use skincare products containing pomegranate extract as per instructions.

Pomegranate

Synergies:

★★★

Pomegranate and Antibiotics

A study found that pomegranate juice exhibits a synergistic antibacterial effect when used with standard antibiotics ampicillin and gentamicin.(707)

★★★★

Pomegranate and Chia seed

The combination of chia seed and pomegranate fruit extracts could be a promising approach for managing skin pigmentation by inhibiting melanin biosynthesis.(708)

Plantago ovata

Psyllium

A small, unassuming plant with narrow, lance-shaped leaves and a towering flower stalk. The flowers give way to small, gel-coated seeds, the source of the highly beneficial Psyllium husks.

Digestive Health and Cholesterol Management

Psyllium might be unassuming in appearance, but its effects are significant. Although it's not the most aesthetically pleasing plant, this modest herb is celebrated for its powerful contribution to digestive well-being and its remarkable dietary fiber content.

Region:

Psyllium, a low-growing herbaceous plant, thrives in the sandy and silty soils of the Mediterranean region, North Africa, and parts of Asia, particularly India, which is the world's leading producer today.

Ancient Uses:

- Psyllium seeds, with high mucilage content, historically promoted digestive regularity and addressed gastrointestinal issues.
- Psyllium husk, a traditional remedy, aids digestion by adding bulk to stool, facilitating its passage through the intestines, and relieving constipation.
- Psyllium is used to manage cholesterol levels; its soluble fiber binds to cholesterol in the digestive tract, potentially reducing LDL (bad) cholesterol and promoting heart health.
- As a traditional remedy for blood sugar management, psyllium's soluble fiber slows carbohydrate digestion, leading to a gradual release of glucose into the bloodstream, potentially beneficial for individuals with diabetes.

Modern research:

- The American College of Gastroenterology recommends psyllium as the sole fiber supplement to treat constipation and irritable bowel syndrome. According to the FDA, psyllium provides five major health benefits: lowering cholesterol, improving glycemic control, decreasing energy intake/weight loss, decreasing blood pressure due to weight loss, and aiding with regularity.(513)
- Psyllium polysaccharides could be a possible natural antioxidant and anti-cancer agent.(514)
- A systematic review of randomized controlled trials found that consuming psyllium significantly reduced triglycerides, low-density lipoprotein, fasting blood sugar, and hemoglobin A1c levels in diabetic patients.(515)
- The efficacy of psyllium seed in treating constipation and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) in patients is very high. The results showed that Psyllium seed was more successful in alleviating GERD and decreasing its recurrences than omeprazole. (516)

Parts used:

The husks (outer coating) of the Psyllium seeds

Preparations:

- Whole Husks: Can be mixed with water or other liquids. Mix 1 teaspoon with water and take up to three times per day.
- Powder and Capsules: A convenient, no-fuss way to incorporate Psyllium into your wellness routine. Take as much as is recommended by your healthcare provider.
- Psyllium should be taken with plenty of water and gradually increased to prevent potential digestive discomfort.

Psyllium seeds and husks

Synergies

★★★★

Psyllium and Wheat bran

Wheat bran in combination with psyllium may reduce the risk of colon cancer, particularly for those accustomed to unhealthy western diets.(517)

★★★★

Psyllium and Chitosan

A blend of chitosan and psyllium in a ratio of 1:2 to1:4 in your diet can potentially minimize the absorption of triglycerides and fats in the gastrointestinal tract, thus allowing for greater weight loss and weight management benefits.(518)

Portulaca oleracea

Purslane

Purslane is a low-growing, succulent plant with small, bright green leaves and tiny yellow flowers. This hardy plant thrives in many environments, commonly seen even in cracks of sidewalks.

Antioxidant and Anti-inflammatory Properties

Often overlooked as a common weed, purslane is actually a hidden gem in the culinary and medicinal world. It's been a dietary staple in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cultures for centuries, prized for its nutritional value and versatility.

Region:

Originally from Eurasia and Africa, purslane is now found worldwide, including across the United States.

Ancient Uses:

- In ancient Greece, purslane was used not just as food but also for its antioxidant and sugar-lowering properties.
- In Chinese medicine, it's been historically used to treat infections and improve digestion.
- Middle Eastern cultures have long utilized purslane for its cooling and healing effects, especially in treating skin ailments and improving gut health.

Modern research:

- Purslane is rich in polyunsaturated essential fatty acids alpha-linolenic acid and linoleic acid, which are essential for normal human growth, health promotion, and disease prevention.(573)
- Purslane is reported to possess neuroprotective, antimicrobial, antidiabetic, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antiulcerogenic, and anticancer activities.(574)
- Purslane is highly nutritious, has essential minerals, vitamins, and proteins, and contains omega-3 fatty acids, which are beneficial for typical wellbeing, cardiovascular health, and immune system support.(575)
- Purslane contains unique phytochemical compounds that provide distinct dietary benefits, including reducing the risk of chronic diseases.(576)

Purslane leaves and stems

Side Effects:

While generally safe, some may experience mild gastrointestinal discomfort. Due to its high oxalate content, individuals prone to kidney stones should consume it in moderation.

Parts used:

Primarily the leaves, but the stems and flower buds are also edible and beneficial.

Dosage:

There's no specific dosage for purslane as it's commonly consumed as a food. However, when used medicinally, it's typically eaten fresh in salads, cooked like spinach, or juiced. For concentrated extracts or supplements, follow the manufacturer's guidelines.

Synergies:

★★★

Purslane and Yogurt

Purslane contains high levels of oxalates, which, while having no metabolic utility in the body, are excreted as waste. One can consider incorporating yogurt with raw purslane leaves to mitigate the oxalate content and make use of the nutrients present in both yogurt and purslane.(577)

★★★

Purslane, Lemon, and Honey

The mixture of purslane leaf extract, 1 tsp lemon juice, and honey taken 3 times a day synergisitically treats conditions like oral, nasal,or rectal bleeding.(578)

Rubus idaeus

Raspberries

Raspberries are small, delicate berries known for their vibrant red hue and sweet yet tart flavor. These berries are made up of many tiny individual segments called drupelets, each containing its own seed.

Enhances Immune Function and Aids Digestion

Valued since ancient times, raspberries were considered a luxury and a medicinal fruit in Roman and medieval times. They have been used in folklore and traditional medicine across Europe and North America for various health benefits.

Region:

Native to Europe and Northern Asia, raspberries are now widely cultivated in temperate regions around the world, especially in the United States, Russia, and Poland.

Ancient Uses:

- Digestive Aid: Rich in dietary fiber, raspberries have been used to promote healthy digestion and relieve constipation.
- Women's Wellness: Traditionally, raspberry leaf tea has been used to ease menstrual discomfort and during pregnancy to strengthen the uterus.
- Immunity Booster: Their high vitamin C content made them a popular choice for boosting immune system health and preventing scurvy.

Modern research:

- The consumption of raspberries promotes human health through the intake of antioxidants, including cyanidin and pelargonidin anthocyanins.(692)
- Raspberry ketone and phenolic-enriched raspberry extract both prevent weight gain and increase overall mobility in male animal models on a high-fat diet.(693)
- Black raspberry extracts help optimize antioxidant activity in the body and have anti-diabetes properties as well.(694)

Side Effects:

Generally safe for most people, but overconsumption can lead to gastrointestinal discomfort. Raspberry ketone supplements should be used cautiously as they may affect blood sugar levels.

Parts used:

Berries, leaves

Fresh raspberries

Preparations:

Raspberries can be eaten fresh, frozen, or dried. They are popular in desserts, jams, and as a topping for cereals and yogurt. Raspberry leaf tea is a common herbal remedy, especially for women's health.

Dosage:

- Oral: A daily serving of a half-cup of fresh raspberries is recommended for general health. Raspberry leaf tea can be consumed 1-2 times daily, especially by women for menstrual or pregnancy-related support.
- Topical: Raspberry-based skincare products, rich in antioxidants, can be applied as per product instructions to enhance skin health.

Synergies:

⭐⭐⭐

Raspberry and Adzuki bean

Combining raspberry and adzuki bean extracts demonstrated enhanced antioxidant interactions.(695)

Raw Honey

Raw honey is unprocessed honey, directly taken from the honeycomb. It's a natural sweetener and contains a range of compounds like antioxidants, enzymes, and minerals. Unlike regular honey, it's not pasteurized, filtered, or processed, retaining its natural benefits.

Natural Antioxidant and Wound Healer

Raw honey is more than just a sweet treat. Ancient Egyptians offered it to their gods and used it as an embalming fluid. Its therapeutic properties are well-documented in Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine. Raw honey's antibacterial and antifungal properties help in wound healing and fighting infections.

Region:

Raw honey can be found worldwide. The specific properties and taste depend on the types of flowers the bees visit.

Ancient Uses:

- Immune System Booster: Its antioxidant properties have made it a go-to solution for boosting the immune system and fighting colds.
- Wound Healer: Used in traditional medicine for skin wounds and burns, raw honey has natural antibacterial qualities.
- Digestive Aid: It's been used to soothe sore throats, aid digestion, and alleviate gastrointestinal disorders.

Modern research:

- Raw honey has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, anticancer, antidiabetic, and protective effects on various systems, including cardiovascular, nervous, respiratory, and gastrointestinal systems.(766)
- Raw honey possesses nootropic effects, such as memory-enhancing benefits, and neuropharmacological activities like anxiolytic, antinociceptive, anticonvulsant, and antidepressant activities.(767)

Side Effects:

While raw honey is safe for most adults, it should not be given to infants under one year due to the risk of botulism. People with pollen allergies should use it cautiously.

Parts used:

The honey extracted directly from the honeycomb

Raw honey

Preparations:

Raw honey can be consumed directly or used as a natural sweetener in beverages, yogurts, and breakfast cereals. It's also used topically in homemade face masks or as a natural ointment for minor burns and cuts.

Dosage:

- Oral: 1-2 teaspoons per day, either consumed directly or mixed in tea, yogurt, or spread on bread.
- Topical: Apply a thin layer on minor wounds, burns, or as part of a face mask mixture.

Synergies:

★★★★

Raw honey and Thyme

Raw honey and thyme essential oil exhibit synergistic antifungal effects, inhibiting the growth of disease-causing fungal species.(768)

★★★★★

Raw honey and Garlic

The combination of honey and garlic can lower your blood pressure and bad cholesterol levels in the body, fight with cold and flu, improve your digestion, treat many digestion-related diseases, and boost your immune system.(769)

★★★★★

Raw honey and Ginger

15% raw honey combined with 5% ginger extract has been shown to maintain the biochemicals with the highest organoleptic quality throughout long-term storage. This combination is effective in boosting the immune system.(770)

For coughs, raw honey is more effective than processed honey. Its antimicrobial properties are more potent in its raw form.

Trifolium pratense

Red clover

Red clover is a perennial herb with pinnately compound leaves that grow up to 20 cm (8 inches) long. It produces pink or purple flowers arranged in a dense, spherical shape.

Menopausal Comfort and Cardiovascular Support

Red clover has a rich history of use in Europe and Asia. It's known for addressing various health issues, including respiratory problems, skin conditions, menopausal symptoms, and promoting heart health, thanks to its blood-purifying properties. Its name comes from the reddish color of its blossoms.

Region:

Red clover is native to Europe and Asia but is now found throughout the world, often in areas with disturbed soil.

Ancient Uses:

- Red clover was highly regarded in Ancient Greece and Rome. It served as a valuable source of animal feed and was particularly important for cattle farming and feeding war horses.
- During the Middle Ages, Europeans considered red clover a symbol of prosperity and good health. In the East, traditional Chinese medicine used red clover as a remedy for whooping cough.
- Red clover was introduced to North America by European immigrants in the 16th century. Native Americans used it as a food source, and people in the Ozarks used it as medicine. The Pennsylvania Dutch also used it to treat croup, similar to how Ancient Chinese practitioners used it.
- Red clover is thought to have blood-purifying properties and has been traditionally used to treat conditions such as gout and arthritis.
- Red clover is high in antioxidants and has been traditionally used to support cardiovascular health.
- It is rich in isoflavones and has been traditionally used to alleviate menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats.
- Red clover has been traditionally used to treat respiratory problems such as bronchitis and asthma.
- Red clover has been used topically to treat various skin conditions, including eczema and psoriasis.

Modern research:

- Red clover sprouts possess potent phytoestrogens and can be used as a dietary supplement to alleviate menopausal symptoms such as cramping, hot flashes, and others.(316)
- A study suggested that women who take red clover for menopausal symptoms may also benefit from normalized cholesterol levels.(317)
- A 2020 study showed that red clover extracts have substantial antioxidant potential, thus providing the body with protection from free radicals. (318)

Side Effects:

Red clover is safe in doses up to 80 mg daily for one year. Possible side effects include muscle aches, nausea, and vaginal spotting. Topical use for 4 weeks is also safe. Red clover can mimic estrogen, so if increased estrogen is a concern due to a medical condition, avoid it.

Parts used:

Flowers and leaves

Preparations:

Red clover can be consumed orally as a tea, capsule, or extract. It can also be applied topically as an infusion or poultice.

Dried red clover flowers

Dosage:

For oral consumption, typical red clover dosages range from 40-80 mg daily for up to one year. Red clover tea is commonly consumed by the cup, up to three times a day. Alternatively, red clover capsules of 40-80 mg can be taken up to three times daily.

Synergies:

★★★★

Red clover and Hop

The blend of red clover and hop extracts can relieve menopausal symptoms, normalize blood circulation, and improve various symptoms like disability, weight gain, hot flashes, hyperlipidemia, and osteoporosis in menopausal women.(319)

Ganoderma lucidum

Reishi mushroom

Immune Booster and Stress Reliever

Reishi mushrooms are fungi that grow on deciduous trees and logs. They have a kidney-shaped reddish-brown appearance, and a long stem.

These mystical fungi work wonders in boosting immunity, melting stress and anxiety, and championing heart health. Deeply revered in traditional Chinese medicine, reishi is highly prized as a remedy for respiratory conditions like asthma and bronchitis.

Region:

Reishi mushrooms are native to East Asia but are now grown in many other parts of the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Reishi, known as "Lingzhi" in ancient China, was considered a rare and potent herb, believed to provide overall health benefits and balance the body's life force.
- It was used in traditional Chinese medicine to affect the heart, kidneys, liver, and lungs, as well as to alleviate asthma and cough.
- In Japan and Korea, reishi was valued for boosting energy, promoting emotional calmness, enhancing the immune system, and supporting longevity.
- Red reishi is known for its heart-protective properties, reducing cholesterol and blood pressure.
- White reishi helps with respiratory health, aiding conditions like asthma and bronchitis.
- Reishi mushrooms have also been used to reduce stress and anxiety, to promote better sleep quality, and as an adaptogen to counter the human body's response to stress.

Modern research:

- Reishi mushroom could be beneficial as a dietary supplement to improve the physical performance of individuals with fibromyalgia. (320)
- Reishi mushroom has a compound called GLIS It stimulates the activation of immune cells, promotes the production of antibodies and immune-modulating substances, and enhances the body's ability to fight tumors.(321)
- Reishi mushroom extract shows potential anti-inflammatory, anticancer, and anti-metastatic properties, suggesting its potential use in treating melanoma and triple-negative breast cancer.(322)

Side Effects:

In some individuals with specific bleeding disorders, consuming high amounts of Reishi mushroom may elevate the risk of bleeding. Additionally, Consuming it can lead to several side effects, including dizziness, dry mouth, itching, nausea, stomach upset, and rash.

Parts used:

Whole mushroom or mushroom extracts

Preparations:

Reishi mushrooms can be consumed as a supplement in capsule or powder form or brewed as tea.

Dosage:

Adults intake oral doses of 1400-5400 mg per day. Reishi mushroom extracts have also been administered in smaller amounts.

Dry reishi mushrooms strips

Synergies:

★★★

Reishi mushroom and Green tea

Combining green tea extract and reishi mushroom extract might be helpful in the fight against breast cancer, by slowing down the tumor growth and spread of aggressive breast cancer cells.(323)

★★★★

Reishi mushroom and Cat's claw

The combination of cat's claw water, medicinal mushroom (Cordyceps, almond mushroom, maitake, turkeytail, and reishi mushroom), nicotinamide, and zinc offers health benefits, including reduced pain, fatigue, weight loss, and decreased DNA damage in peripheral blood. (324)

Rhodiola rosea

Rhodiola rosea

Rhodiola rosea is a perennial plant that grows to a height of about 30 cm (12 inches). It has pale green leaves and yellow or pink flowers that bloom in the summer. The plant has a thick, fleshy root that is used medicinally.

Enhances Mental and Physical Stamina, Reduces Stress

Rhodiola rosea is a herb with a long history of use in traditional medicine. It is commonly known as "golden root" or "arctic root" due to its ability to grow in cold, mountainous regions. Rhodiola rosea is believed to have adaptogenic properties, which can help the body adapt to physical and mental stress. It is also thought to have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects.

Region:

Rhodiola rosea is native to the arctic regions of Europe and Asia, including Russia, Sweden, and China.

Ancient Uses:

- In the 13th century BCE, Greeks traded across the Aegean Sea and reached Colchis, now Georgia, where they found ideal conditions for cultivating Rhodiola rosea. In 77 AD, the ancient Greek physician Dioscorides conducted medicinal experiments with this herb, referred to as Rodia riza, and recorded his findings in De Materia Medica
- In ancient China, emperors dispatched their representatives to Siberia in search of "the golden root." People brewed tea from this herb to treat common illnesses such as colds and flu.
- The Vikings consumed Rhodiola rosea to enhance their stamina and strength, which was essential for their marauding and plundering activities. In Siberia, it is believed that drinking Rhodiola rosea tea can promote longevity.
- Rhodiola rosea is commonly used to help reduce stress and anxiety. It is believed to have a calming effect on the nervous system.
- Rhodiola rosea may improve memory, learning, and problem-solving skills.
- It is sometimes used as a performance-enhancing supplement due to its potential to increase energy and reduce fatigue.

Modern research:

- Rhodiola rosea may alleviate symptoms of mild to moderate depression and mild anxiety, and may also enhance mood.(325)
- Rhodiola rosea components display anti-inflammatory and neuroprotective effects, suggesting therapeutic potential for treating inflammation and various neurodegenerative diseases.(326)
- Compounds found in Rhodiola rosea could be a beneficial dietary supplement for people with diabetes because they help protect and support the health of their beta cells, which are essential for managing blood sugar.It also has potential to increase energy and reduce fatigue.(327)

Side Effects:

Rhodiola rosea could result in dizziness, dry mouth, or excessive saliva as side effects. Additionally, it is believed that Rhodiola rosea may stimulate the immune system, which could spell danger for individuals with autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis (MS) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA), among others.

Parts used:

Root

Rhodiola rosea root

Preparations:

Rhodiola rosea is most commonly taken as a supplement in capsule or extract form. It can also be consumed as tea.

Dosage:

Adults can use Rhodiola rosea orally in doses ranging from 100 to 600 mg per day for up to 12 weeks. It is generally recommended to start with a lower dosage and increase it as needed. Capsules or extracts should be taken as directed by the manufacturer.

Synergies:

★★★★

Rhodiola rosea and Caffeine

The combination of Rhodiola rosea and caffeine could serve as a potential supplement for individuals engaging in resistance training, with the benefit of increasing physical performance.(328)

Take Rhodiola in the morning or early afternoon to prevent sleep disruption due to its energizing effects.

Aspalathus linearis

Rooibos

Rooibos is a broom-like shrub that can grow up to 2 meters in height. It has needle-like leaves and small, yellow flowers.

Antioxidant Rich and Calming

Also known as Red Bush or Red Tea, rooibos is famous worldwide for its distinctive, naturally sweet and earthy flavor. Aside from its popularity as a caffeine-free alternative to tea and coffee, rooibos is renowned for its rich antioxidant content and numerous potential health benefits.

Region:

Rooibos is native to the Cederberg Mountains of the Western Cape province in South Africa.

Ancient Uses:

- Indigenous Khoisan people of the Cape region have long used rooibos for its medicinal properties, brewing it into a tea to alleviate digestive issues, skin problems, and nervous tension.
- Rooibos contains various compounds, such as quercetin and rutin, which exhibit anti-inflammatory properties. These properties may contribute to reducing inflammation in the body and help alleviate symptoms associated with inflammatory conditions like arthritis.
- Rooibos is known for its calming and soothing effects. It is often enjoyed as a caffeine-free alternative to black or green tea, making it suitable for individuals sensitive to caffeine or seeking a relaxing beverage before bedtime.
- Rooibos has been used in traditional medicine for its potential benefits to the skin. It is believed to possess anti-aging properties, aid in skin rejuvenation, and help with conditions like eczema and acne when used topically.

Modern research:

- Rooibos herbal tea is a potent dietary source of antioxidants, which can significantly improve the liver's antioxidant status under oxidative stress conditions.(519)
- Rooibos treatment enhances sperm count, viability, and motility, likely due to its high antioxidant content.(520)
- Rooibos is a functional food for prevention and supplementary treatment of cardiovascular disease.(521)

Parts used:

Leaves and stems

Preparations:

Rooibos is typically prepared as a tea, steeped in boiling water for several minutes to extract its full flavor and benefits. As a tea, Rooibos can generally be consumed freely, with many individuals enjoying 2-3 cups daily. It can also be found in supplement form, used as an ingredient in skincare products, or used as a natural dye. As a supplement, the dosage can vary greatly depending on the form and specific product, so it's best to follow the healthcare's recommendations.

Rooibos aerial parts

Dried leaves and stems

Synergies:

★★★★

Rooibos and Honeybush

Rooibos and honeybush teas have unique polyphenolic compounds with potential health benefits, including antimutagenic, antioxidant, cancer modulating, and cardiovascular properties.(522)

Hibiscus sabdariffa

Roselle

Natural Heart and Liver Tonic

Roselle is a flowering shrub with edible leaves, flowers, and fruits. The flowers, with their eye-catching calyces, are used to brew herbal teas, jams, jellies, and syrups.

Roselle, a plant as beautiful as it is beneficial, offers a range of medicinal uses. Its abundant phytochemicals like polyphenols, particularly anthocyanins, polysaccharides, and organic acids, make it a powerhouse for health.

Region:

Originally from tropical and subtropical areas of Africa and Southeast Asia, Roselle is now cultivated globally.

Ancient Uses:

- Traditionally, roselle has been revered for its therapeutic properties, especially as a tonic for the heart and liver. Various cultures have used it to alleviate conditions such as high blood pressure, cholesterol issues, digestive problems, and even sore throats. Its role in ancient herbal remedies highlights its significance in natural medicine.

Modern research:

- Rosselle leaf extracts exhibit antibacterial activity against skin infection causing bacteria.(594)
- Roselle powder has excellent antioxidant properties due to its high anthocyanin content.(595)
- Roselle tea may reduce blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels in those with diabetes and metabolic syndrome.(596)
- Roselle leaves have been used to treat a wide range of ailments, including hypertension, diabetes, liver diseases, and bacterial infections. It is a remedy for digestive issues and as a diuretic. (597)

Parts used:

The most commonly used parts are the calyces of the flowers, but leaves and fruits are also edible and beneficial.

Side Effects:

While generally safe, consuming roselle can sometimes lead to mild side effects like stomach upset or allergies, particularly in those sensitive to hibiscus plants.

Roselle calyces

Dosage:

For making Roselle tea, use about 1.5 to 2 grams of dried calyces per cup of hot water, steeped for 5 to 10 minutes. This can be enjoyed once or twice daily. However, for specific health conditions, consult with a healthcare provider for appropriate dosages.

Synergies:

★★★★

Roselle with Moringa or Rosemary

Roselle extract combined with moringa or rosemary extract showed an insignificant decrease in fasting blood glucose levels in animal models fed a high fat diet. (598)

★★★

Roselle, Cacao, and Great millet

Herbal decoctions from roselle, cacao tree, and great millet can provide minerals and help stabilize red blood cells against stress injury. (599)

Rosmarinus officinalis

Rosemary

Rosemary is an evergreen shrub that can grow up to 2 meters (6.5 feet) tall. It has thin, needle-like leaves that are green on top and silver-white on the underside. The plant produces small, blue, or white flowers that bloom in the spring or early summer.

Boosts Memory, Eases Muscle Pain, and Enhances Digestion

Rosemary, a spicy-scented herb that has donned culinary and medicinal hats for centuries, enhancing meals while boosting cognitive function, soothing indigestion, and easing muscle pain and respiratory issues. It also brings to the table anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. 'Ros marinus' in Latin, or 'dew of the sea,' its name mirrors its refreshing essence.

Region:

Rosemary is native to the Mediterranean but is now widely cultivated in other parts of the world, even cooler climates.

Ancient Uses:

- Dried sprigs of rosemary were found in Egyptian tombs from 3,000 B.C. Dioscorides wrote about its use in his work "De Materia Medica".
- In the 13th century, the Spanish used rosemary as a condiment for salted meats. The Queen of Hungary used a rosemary and wine mixture to cure paralysis, later known for treating dandruff and skin issues. Rosemary was also used as a charm against evil spirits, placed under pillows to prevent nightmares, and used to repel moths between sheets.
- Ancient Greek students wore rosemary wreaths for better memory and concentration during exams.
- Rosemary has been a part of religious ceremonies for ancient Greeks, Romans, and Christians. Legend has it that the Virgin Mary, while fleeing Egypt, threw her blue cape onto a rosemary bush, causing its white flowers to turn blue and giving rise to the name "rose of Mary."

Modern research:

- Rosemary has shown potential therapeutic effects on nervous system disorders, including inflammation, analgesia, anti-anxiety, and memory boosting. (329)
- Study results showed that rosemary has the potential to be used as dietary ingredients with the ability to modulate the immune system for increased function.(330)
- Rosemary essential oil has properties that can slow cell growth, protect your cells from damage, and fight off harmful bacteria. It also has antiproliferative, antioxidant, and antibacterial properties. (331)

Side Effects:

Exercise caution with undiluted rosemary oil or excessive rosemary leaf consumption, as it may lead to potential side effects like vomiting, sun sensitivity, and skin redness.

Parts used:

Flowers, leaves, and stems

Preparations:

Rosemary can be used fresh or dried and consumed orally as a tea, capsule, extract, or applied topically as an essential oil or in creams or lotions.

Dosage:

To take rosemary orally, consume 1 to 2 cups of rosemary tea daily, and if taking capsules or extracts, follow the recommended dosage provided by the manufacturer.

Dried rosemary leaves

Synergies:

★★★★

Rosemary, Ginger, Chinese sumac, and Boswellia

The topical application of rosemary, ginger, chinese sumac, and boswellia extract shows synergistic effect in treating muscle and joint pain.(332)

★★★

Rosemary and Clove

Rosemary and clove essential oils have antimicrobial properties. This combination can be applied to wounds for preventing bacterial infections.(333)

★★★

Rosemary and Clove

Combining cloves and rosemary in a 1:1 ratio increases their pain relief and anti-inflammatory properties. (334)

When grilling meats, add rosemary. Its antioxidants can significantly reduce carcinogen formation, potentially slashing levels by up to 100%.

Crocus sativus

Saffron

A beautiful, purple crocus flower blooming in the fall. The rich, golden stigmas protruding from the heart of the flower.

Antidepressant and Anti-inflammatory

Saffron, the most expensive spice in the world, harvested by hand from thousands of flowers. It's a culinary jewel and a potent medicinal herb with an illustrious history. Its luxurious color, unique flavor, and health-promoting properties have been celebrated by connoisseurs of food and health alike for over three millennia.

Region:

Saffron, the golden treasure of the spice world, is native to Greece and Southwest Asia. Today, Iran produces the majority of the world's saffron, followed by other countries including India, Greece, and Afghanistan.

Ancient Uses:

- From the healing centers of ancient Egypt to the royal kitchens of the Persian Empire, Saffron has been used as a culinary spice, a dye, a perfume, and a powerful herbal medicine. It was reputed to improve digestion, uplift moods, enhance libido, and promote radiant skin.
- Saffron has been traditionally used for its anti-inflammatory properties. It may reduce inflammation in the body and alleviate symptoms of inflammatory conditions, such as arthritis.

Modern research:

- Saffron has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-atherogenic, anti-apoptotic, anti-hypertensive, and hypolipidemic effects. The pharmacological effects of saffron are attributed to its components, such as safranal, crocetin, and crocins, which may be beneficial for maintaining a healthy heart.(523)
- Saffron can have similar antidepressant and anti-anxiety properties to fluoxetine, imipramine, and citalopram, indicating it could be an effective and safe treatment option for depression.(524)

Parts used:

The stigmas (or threads) of the Saffron flower are the valuable parts used, painstakingly harvested by

Close-up of saffron flower

hand due to their delicate nature.

Preparations:.

- Spice: The dried stigmas can be used directly in cooking or steeped into a flavorful tea. A pinch (about 20-30 threads) is usually enough to flavor most dishes.
- Tincture: An alcohol-based extract that concentrates the beneficial compounds.
- Capsules and Tablets: These offer a convenient way to include Saffron in your wellness routine. For tinctures, tabs, and capsules, follow your healthcare provider's recommendations.

Fresh and dried stigmas

Synergies:

★★★

Saffron and Chamomile

A combination of saffron and chamomile with 1:3 ratio improves diabetes control and reduces its related psychiatric effects. It may also improve mood and enhance memory.(525)

★★★★

Saffron and Cinnamon

Saffron and cinnamon show potential in treating oral cancer and improving oral health.(526)

★★★

Saffron and Crocin

Saffron and its crocin molecules show potential as a natural solution for treating depression disorders, with potential benefits similar to fluoxetine and imipramine.(527)

Salvia officinalis

Sage

Sage is an evergreen shrub growing up to 1.5 meters (5 feet) tall. It has grey-green leaves that are soft to the touch and small blue or purple flowers that bloom in the summer. The plant has a woody stem and produces an intense aroma.

Soothes Indigestion, Eases Menopausal Symptoms, and Offers Antioxidant Benefits

Sage - a herb with medicinal properties and lending its distinct flavor to our dishes. With a slightly bitter charm, sage soothes indigestion, eases menopausal symptoms, and calms sore throats. And there's more - it's a proud bearer of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties too.

Region:

Sage is native to the Mediterranean region but is now widely cultivated in other parts of the world with similar climates.

Ancient Uses:

- The use of sage for fertility purposes has been documented in ancient Egyptian records. The ancient Greeks believed it could improve memory function and used it as a meat preservative.
- In ancient Rome, sage was commonly included in meals to aid digestion, and it was also used to stop bleeding, soothe sore throats, and treat ulcers. The Romans also believed it could stimulate brain function and even used it for dental hygiene.
- During the Middle Ages, the Chinese used it to treat various issues related to the digestive and nervous systems.
- Like many other herbs, sage was used in ceremonial and medicinal contexts well before people discovered its culinary applications. In fact, during the Middle Ages, sage was one of sixteen herbs monks used to prepare different remedies and therapies.
- Sage was used in ancient cuisine and is still used today to flavor meats, stuffing, and vegetables. It is also used to preserve cheese and is a traditional ingredient in the Italian liqueur Amaro.

Modern research:

- Sage may offer a significant supply of substances with anti-proliferative qualities that prevent the growth of cancer cells, thus enhancing lung cancer treatment.(336)
- A study suggested that the extract from sage could be a promising option for the prevention of angiogenesis, the formation of new blood vessels.(337)
- A study showed that sage could be beneficial in managing diabetes by decreasing both 2hpp and cholesterol levels. Sage may also lower fasting blood glucose and glycosylated hemoglobin.(338)

Side Effects:

Certain species of sage, such as Salvia officinalis, contain thujone, which can cause seizures and damage the liver and nervous system.

Parts used:

Leaves and stems

Preparations:

Sage can be used fresh or dried and consumed orally as a capsule, extract, or tea. It can also be applied topically as an essential oil or in creams or lotions. It is also used as a seasoning in cooking.

Dosage:

Sage extract has been utilized as a medication for adults in the form of oral doses ranging from 280-1500 mg per day, taken for up to 12 weeks.

Sage oil

Synergies:

★★★

Sage and Peppermint

The mixtures of peppermint and sage extracts at a 1:1 ratio can potentially inhibit cancer cell growth.(339)

Smilax ornata

Sarsaparilla

Sarsaparilla is a woody, perennial climbing vine with prickly stems and heart-shaped, deeply veined leaves. The plant's roots, known for their sweet, spicy flavor, are the primary source of its medicinal properties.

Soothes Skin and Rheumatic Conditions

Sarsaparilla, a plant revered in various traditional medicines, is celebrated for its diverse health benefits. The roots, distinct for their spicy yet sweet taste, have been a staple in herbal remedies across the Americas.

Region:

Native to the tropical Americas, from Mexico to Peru, thriving in warm, humid environments.

Ancient Uses:

- Historically, sarsaparilla roots have been used to treat a range of ailments, including skin diseases, rheumatism, digestive issues, and syphilis. It was also considered an aphrodisiac and a stimulant for circulation. In traditional practices, it was often combined with other herbs to enhance its potency.

Modern research:

- Sarsaparilla root has been shown to have anticancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial properties, making it a potential treatment for rheumatism, leprosy, impotence, urinary tract infections, and skin infections.(643)
- Sarsaparilla berries are a great source of various carotenoids for the food, animal feed, and pharmaceutical industries.(644)
- Sarsaparilla root extract has therapeutic potential for the treatment of cancer, with cytotoxic, proapoptotic, and cytostatic properties.(645)
- Sarsaparilla root essential oil has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-diabetic properties, therefore showing great medicinal promise. It may also be used as a pesticide.(646)

Side Effects:

While generally safe, sarsaparilla can cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Prolonged use might lead to gastrointestinal discomfort.

Parts used:

Roots

Dosage:

There is no standard dosage, but traditionally, a tea is made by steeping 1-2 teaspoons of dried root in boiling water. Capsules and extracts are also available; follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Sarsaparilla berries

Synergies:

★★★★

Sarsaparilla and Black pepper

A combination of black pepper and the paste of sarsaparilla root made by grinding it with water is beneficial for stomach aches and diarrhoea.(647)

★★★★

Sarsaparilla, Rose, Lotus, Milk, and Honey

A decoction prepared using sarsaparilla root, dried rose petals, lotus petals, milk, and honey may have synergistic antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, refreshing effects when taken in the summer.(648)

Serenoa repens

Saw Palmetto

A low-growing, clumping palm with sharp, saw-toothed leaves and small, deep purple-black berries. This robust and enduring plant is saw palmetto, a treasure of the American South.

Prostate Health and Urinary Support

Saw palmetto, a stalwart of the coastal plains that carries within its berries a potent secret for supporting men's health. This humble plant is one of the most extensively studied and widely used natural remedies for prostate health and urinary function.

Region:

Saw palmetto is a hardy, palm-like plant native to the southeastern United States, particularly thriving in Florida's sandy coastal lands.

Ancient Uses:

- Native American tribes, like the Seminoles, have long valued saw palmetto for food and medicine. They used the berries to treat urinary and reproductive problems, and as a tonic to nourish the body and ease coughs and colds.
- Prostate Health: Saw palmetto has been traditionally used for its potential benefits in supporting prostate health. It is commonly used to alleviate symptoms associated with benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), such as frequent urination, weak urine flow, and nighttime urination.
- Hormonal Balance: Saw palmetto is believed to have hormonal balancing effects. It is thought to inhibit the conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone (DHT), which is associated with conditions like hair loss and prostate enlargement.

Modern research:

- Saw palmetto oil and its main fatty acids might be useful for controlling bacterial infections and multispecies biofilms.(528)
- Saw palmetto therapy, either as a single agent or supplemented with tamsulosin, caused a major decrease in two inflammatory biomarkers and in the prostate-specific antigen level. Saw palmetto might be a suitable alternative to conventional therapy for mild BPH cases. (529)

Parts used:

The ripe berries of the Saw Palmetto plant are the most valuable for their high concentration of beneficial fatty acids and phytosterols.

Preparations:

- Tea: The berries can be dried and steeped to make a somewhat pungent tea. One cup of Saw Palmetto tea can be consumed 1-2 times per day.
- Extracts: These are often standardized to contain a specific percentage of fatty acids and phytosterols. Use as indicated by your healthcare provider.
- Capsules and Softgels: Offer a convenient, taste-free way to incorporate saw palmetto into your wellness routine.

Dried berries

Synergies:

★★★

Saw palmetto and Pumpkin

Pumpkin seed oil and saw palmetto oil are clinically safe and may be effective as complementary treatments for benign prostatic hyperplasia.(530)

Senna alexandrina

Senna

Senna is a shrub or small tree that can grow up to 2 meters in height. It has feather-like leaves and produces yellow, five-petal flowers.

Natural Laxatives for Constipation Relief

Known for its potent purgative properties, senna has been used for centuries as a natural remedy for constipation. The leaves and pods of this small shrub contain compounds known as sennosides, which stimulate bowel movements and help alleviate constipation.

Region:

Senna is native to Northern Africa, particularly Egypt. It is now cultivated worldwide, including in India and the Arabian Peninsula.

Ancient Uses:

- The use of senna as a laxative dates back over 2000 years to the times of ancient Egyptian medicine.
- It was also used traditionally in Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine for its purgative properties.
- Due to its laxative properties, senna has been traditionally used for colon cleansing. It is believed to help flush out waste and toxins from the colon, supporting detoxification processes in the body.
- Senna is often used as a short-term solution for occasional constipation. It is not typically recommended for long-term use, as it may lead to dependence or bowel habituation.

Modern research:

- Research shows that laxatives containing senna are safe for use.(531)
- Senna is unlikely to cause liver toxicity at doses commonly used in humans.(532)

Parts used:

The leaves and fruit (or pods)

Preparations:

Senna can be prepared as a tea or decoction, often combined with other herbs or spices to improve the taste. It is also commonly available in capsule or tablet form and as a liquid extract. For adults, a common dosage for constipation is 17.2 mg of sennosides per day in tablet form, or as directed on supplement packaging.

Side effect:

Senna is generally considered safe for short-term use, prolonged use can lead to laxative dependence, electrolyte imbalance, and other potential side effects. It should be used with caution, especially in children, pregnant women, and individuals with certain health conditions.

Senna pods

Fresh and dried leaves

Synergies:

★★★★

Senna species

Three species of senna plants S. alata (Sal), S. alexandrina (Sax) and S. occidentalis (Soc) show synergistic effects against tapeworms.(533)

★★★★

Senna and Vinegar

Blend dried leaves of senna in vinegar and apply this paste to the skin to treat pimples, acne, and eczema.(534)

Allium cepa var. aggregatum

Shallot

The shallot is a type of onion, distinct for its mild flavor and a hint of garlic. It grows in clusters, with each bulb cloaked in delicate, coppery skin. Smaller than onions, shallots are often considered more gourmet in cooking.

Enhances Heart Health and Supports Immune Function

Valued in French cuisine for centuries, shallots were also prized by ancient Assyrians, who cultivated them in 3000 BCE. The name "shallot" comes from Ashkelon, an ancient Canaanite city, where people believed these bulbs originated. Today, shallots are celebrated for their cardiovascular benefits and immune-boosting properties.

Region:

Originally from Central or Southwest Asia, shallots thrive in varied climates. They're now widely cultivated globally, especially in Europe, Asia, and the United States.

Ancient Uses:

- Heart Helper: Ancient Greeks valued shallots for their blood-thinning properties, which promote heart health and reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases.
- Immune Booster: Rich in antioxidants, shallots were used in traditional Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine to enhance the body's immunity and combat illnesses.
- Digestive Aid: Their dietary fiber and prebiotics make shallots a favorite for supporting healthy digestion and gut flora.

Modern research:

- Shallots are high in antioxidants and improve heart health. They are also beneficial for cancer prevention, diabetes prevention, and treating allergies, and they contain both anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial benefits.(732)
- Shallots contain fiber, vitamin B6 and C, calcium, iron, magnesium, and proteins that support healthy weight and heart-health and serve as a complementary spice.(733)
- Shallot is a potential dietary source of organic polysulfides, which are beneficial to cardiovascular health.(734)

Side Effects:

Shallots are generally safe but can cause heartburn or digestive upset in sensitive individuals. They may also cause irritation when handled or consumed in large quantities.

Parts used:

Bulbs, both fresh and dried

Shallot bulbs

Preparations:

Shallots can be used raw or cooked in various dishes. They add depth to sauces, dressings, and marinades. Finely chopped shallots enhance salads, soups, and stews. Shallot oil and infused vinegars are also popular.

Dosage:

- Culinary: Incorporate 1-2 chopped shallots into your daily diet in cooked dishes or salads for general health benefits.
- Medicinal: Consume 1 tablespoon of minced shallot daily, either raw or cooked, to leverage its health benefits. Consult a healthcare provider for specific therapeutic dosages.

Synergies:

★★★

Shallot and Garlic

Shallot and garlic preparations have significant antioxidant potential, decreasing free radicals and inhibiting lipid oxidation.(735)

Lentinula edodes, Grifola frondosa

Shiitake and MaitakeMushrooms

Shiitake: umbrella-shaped, brown caps; Maitake: ruffled, fan-like appearance.

Natural Laxatives for Constipation Relief

Shiitake and Maitake mushrooms have been a cornerstone in enhancing longevity and health. The Japanese name "Shiitake" comes from the "Shii" tree on which they commonly grow, while "Maitake" translates to "dancing mushroom," named for people's joy upon finding it in the wild.

Region:

While originally native to the mountainous regions of East Asia, Shiitake and Maitake mushrooms are now cultivated worldwide due to their growing popularity in various cuisines and health products.

Ancient Uses:

- Immune Booster: Both Shiitake and Maitake mushrooms have been used to strengthen the immune system. Maitake is particularly noted for its beta-glucans, which stimulate immune response.
- Heart Ally: These mushrooms have been consumed to support heart health, to reduce bad cholesterol levels, and to promote good cholesterol.
- Cancer Combatant: Historical texts mention their use in traditional medicine for potential anti-cancer benefits, though modern science is still exploring these claims.

Modern research:

- Shiitake and maitake mushrooms have various degrees of immunomodulatory, lipid-lowering, antitumor, and other therapeutic health effects.(797)
- Shiitake mushrooms contain 12.4g/100g of folate, while maitake mushrooms have 29.8g/100g.Folate (vitamin B-9) is important in red blood cell formation and for healthy cell growth and function.(798)
- Shiitake mushrooms have medicinal and therapeutic value in preventing/treating cancer, viral diseases, hypercholesterolemia, blood platelet aggregation, and hypertension.(799)
- Maitake extracts show promise as immunity boosters, as additional treatment to cancer and HIV therapy, and may benefit the treatment of hyperlipidemia, hypertension, and hepatitis. (800)

Parts used:

Caps and stems of the mushrooms

Preparations:

Shiitake and Maitake can be cooked fresh in a variety of dishes, such as soups, stir-fries, and broths. Dried mushrooms can be rehydrated and used similarly. Mushroom extracts are also available in supplement form.

Dosage:

- Culinary: Incorporate fresh or dried mushrooms into your meals several times a week.
- Supplement: Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for extract or capsule supplements. Generally, 500-2000 mg per day is recommended for maintaining overall health.

Side effect:

While generally safe, some people may experience digestive upset or allergic reactions. Those on blood-thinning medication should consult a doctor due to potential interactions.

Shiitake mushrooms

Maitake mushrooms

To boost their vitamin D content, consider drying shiitake mushrooms under the sun before use.

Scutellaria baicalensis, S. lateriflora

Skullcap

American skullcap is named for its cap-like blue or purple flowers. It is a slender plant, reaching 2 to 4 feet in height. Chinese skullcap has green leaves and purple flowers, growing up to one foot tall.

Promotes Relaxation and Supports Nervous System Health

Skullcap refers to plants in the mint family Lamiaceae, including American (Scutellaria lateriflora) and Chinese (Scutellaria baicalensis) types. American skullcap is a mild relaxant with a long history of use, while Chinese skullcap is extensively studied in traditional Chinese medicine for treating allergies, infections, inflammation, cancer, and headaches.

Region:

American skullcap is native to North America but is now widely cultivated in Europe and other areas of the world. Chinese skullcap is native to China and parts of Russia.

Ancient Uses:

- American skullcap leaves were traditionally used by Cherokee and other North American tribes to make tea or tonic, promoting menstruation and symbolizing the transition to womanhood.
- Cherokee and Iroquois tribes used American skullcap roots for various purposes such as treating breast pains, diarrhea, kidney problems, and preventing smallpox. Additionally, it was used as a nerve tonic and sedative in North American folk medicine and for treating anxiety through skullcap tea.
- American skullcap was called "mad dog weed" in the 1700s when it was reportedly used to treat rabies.
- Eclectics John King and Robert Newton dismissed it as a rabies treatment in 1852, but prescribed it for various ailments in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. American and Canadian herbalists and naturopaths still use it as a very effective antispasmodic and sedative.
- Chinese skullcap was documented in ancient texts like Shennong Bencao Jing and Li Shizhen's Bencao Gangmu. These texts, dating back to the Eastern Han Dynasty and in 1593, respectively, highlighted the plant's uses for ailments such as diarrhea, hypertension, inflammation, and insomnia.
- In the late 1990s, Chinese skullcap showed promise in treating allergies. Flavones in skullcap were discovered to protect nerve cells from oxidation damage, which could help in Alzheimer's disease treatment.

Modern research:

- Skullcap's chemical components have demonstrated antimicrobial, antioxidant, antifeedant, enzyme inhibition, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties.(342)
- Studies have demonstrated that skullcap, thanks to the flavones it contains, can be used to treat various medical conditions such as nervous disorders and cancer. (343)

Side Effects:

Possible side effects include diarrhea, an upset stomach, and drowsiness. Large doses may cause confusion, erratic pulse, giddiness, seizures, and twitching.

Parts used:

American skullcap uses leaves, flowers, and stems, while Chinese skullcap uses skinless yellow roots for medicinal purposes.

Preparations:

American skullcap is available as a powder or liquid extract. Chinese skullcap is available as a powder. Both are taken internally.

Dosage:

American skullcap: For tincture, take 2-4 ml three times daily (1:5 ratio herb to liquid).

Infusion/tea: Steep 1-2 tsp dried herb in 1 cup boiling water for 15-20 minutes. Drink 1 cup three times per day.

Capsules: Take 400 mg three times daily.

Chinese skullcap: Recommended dosage for powdered root extract capsule is 400-1000 mg, 2-3 times daily. Choose an extract with at least 30% baicalin, the active component. Tincture form: 1-2 mL, up to 3 times daily.

Dry skullcap aerial parts

Ulmus fulva

Slippery Elm

This tree grows over 50 feet tall with a broad open crown. Its branches are red, brown, or orange, and its flowers cluster densely. The long green leaves darken in autumn. The bark has deep fissures, a gummy texture, and a slight odor.

Soothes Digestive Tract and Relieves Sore Throats

Slippery Elm's inner bark contains special chemicals that enhance mucus secretion. It serves as a versatile remedy for various stomach and intestinal problems, including constipation and stomach ulcers. Initially classified as Ulmus americana in 1753, it was later identified as a separate species by botanist Gotthilf Muhlenberg in 1793.

Region:

The species is native to eastern North America, ranging from southeast North Dakota, east to Maine and southern Quebec, south to northernmost Florida, and west to eastern Texas.

Ancient Uses:

- Slippery Elm, with its gummy inner bark, played a vital role in early America. Native Americans shared its uses, including as a laxative and for making tallow. The Liberty Bell's yoke was crafted from Slippery Elm wood.
- In colonial America, Slippery Elm served as a versatile remedy and survival food. It treated lung issues, tapeworms, and various skin conditions. Its bark poultice required constant moisture to avoid discomfort.
- Colonial Americans used Slippery Elm to make nourishing broth for those with disabilities and for weaning infants.
- Revolutionary Army surgeons used slippery elm bark poultices for gunshot wounds. In the American Revolution, a lost soldier survived ten days on slippery elm and sassafras bark. In the War of 1812, US Army troops fed their horses slippery elm inner bark during a hay shortage in a snowy winter.
- The Henry Thayer Company's Slippery Elm throat lozenges, introduced in the late 1800s, remain popular today, offering relief for throat discomfort.

Modern research:

- Slippery elm can be used as an alternative medicine for upper airway inflammatory conditions.(344)
- Herbal therapies used for Slippery elm can have benefits for people with inflammatory bowel disease due to having antioxidant effects relieving a variety of symptoms.(345)
- Elm bark extracts show potential in increasing immune system function in animal models, with potential benefits for treating inflammation, antioxidant activity, and cancer.(346)

Side Effects:

Common side effects include allergies, skin irritation, and a risk of miscarriage for pregnant women. If you have pollen allergies, avoid it. Take it separately from other medications by at least 2 hours to prevent interference with medication absorption.

Parts used:

Inner bark

Dosage:

For powdered inner bark (1:8 decoction), take 4-16 ml orally, thrice daily. Use powdered inner bark as a nutritional supplement by mixing 4 g with 500 ml of water and taking it orally three times daily. For liquid extract (1:1, 60% alcohol), take 5 ml orally three times daily. For poultice use, mix coarse powdered inner bark with boiling water and apply topically.

Dry bark of slippery elm

Synergies:

★★★★

Slippery elm, Curcumin, Aloe vera, Guar gum, Pectin, Peppermint, and Glutamine

The Nutrition Care (NC) Gut Relief Formula is a combination of herbs and nutrients including curcumin, Aloe vera, slippery elm, guar gum, pectin, peppermint oil, and glutamine shown to benefit the gastrointestinal system by relieving various symptoms associated with general gastrointestinal upset.(347)

★★★★

Slippery elm bark, Lactulose, Oat bran, and Licorice

A mixture of dried powdered slippery elm bark, lactulose, oat bran, and licorice root (C-IBS formula) significantly improved both bowel habit and Inflammatory Bowel Syndrome symptoms in patients with constipation predominant IBS.(348)

Arthrospira platensis

Spirulina

Spirulina is a blue-green algae that thrives in alkaline, freshwater lakes. It is rich in proteins, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, making it a highly nutritious superfood.

Powerhouse of Nutrients and Immune Booster

Spirulina has a history dating back to the Aztecs, who called it 'Tecuitlatl' and relied on it as a vital protein source. It was also used in the 9th century by the Kanem Empire in Chad, Africa. Today, spirulina is revered for enhancing immunity, gut health, and as a vegan protein source.

Region:

Spirulina naturally grows in high-salt alkaline water bodies in subtropical and tropical regions, including Mexico, Africa, and parts of Asia. It is now cultivated worldwide in controlled environments for consistency and purity.

Ancient Uses:

- Immune Strengthener: Traditionally, spirulina was known for its ability to enhance the immune system, helping the body to resist infections.
- Energy Booster: Its high nutrient content made it a favored supplement for increasing energy and endurance.
- Digestive Aid: Spirulina has been used to support gut health due to its high fiber content and the presence of beneficial nutrients.

Modern research:

- Spirulina preparations have a high antioxidant and antiinflammatory potential, thus reducing oxidative stress and/or oxygen radicals in inflammatory processes.(747)
- Spirulina can help reduce mental fatigue, protect brain vessels, regulate internal pressure, and improve motor, language, and cognitive skills in malnourished children.(748)

Side Effects:

While spirulina is generally safe, it can cause side effects like nausea, insomnia, and headaches in some people. Those with autoimmune conditions or on immune-suppressing medication should consult a healthcare provider before using.

Parts used:

The whole spirulina algae, dried and processed into powder, flakes, or tablets.

Powdered spirulina

Preparations:

Spirulina can be consumed in various forms, including powder, tablets, or incorporated into foods and beverages. It can be added to smoothies, juices, or sprinkled on salads and dishes for a nutritional boost.

Dosage:

Dietary: The recommended daily intake is 1-2 teaspoons (3-5 grams) of spirulina powder or 1-2 tablets. Start with a smaller dose to assess tolerance and gradually increase.

Synergies:

★★★★

Spirulina and Artemisinin

Spirulina alone cannot effectively treat malaria, but when combined with artemisinin combination therapy, it can enhance antimalarial activity.(749)

★★★★

Spirulina in smoothies

Sprinkle about 1 tsp of spirulina powder into your smoothie before blending. Pineapple, banana, orange, and mango-based smoothies are best to mix with spirulina.(750)

★★★★

Spirulina and Spinach

Spirulina powder works well in spinach superfood smoothies, as it blends well with the savory ingredients without becoming overpowering.(751)

Integrating spirulina into a smoothie with vitamin C-rich fruits can enhance iron absorption from this superfood.

Hypericum perforatum

St. John's wort

Alleviates Depression and Anxiety

St. John's Wort is an herbaceous perennial plant that grows to 60 cm (2 feet). It has bright yellow flowers with five petals and numerous black dots on the petals and leaves. The leaves are oval-shaped, and the plant has a woody stem.

St. John's Wort is most commonly used to treat mild to moderate depression and anxiety, and some studies have suggested that it may be effective for these purposes. However, St. John's Wort may interact with certain medications and cause side effects in some people, so it should be used with caution.

Region:

St. John's Wort is native to Europe but is now widely cultivated in other parts of the world, including North America and Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- St. John's Wort has been recognized for its medicinal and therapeutic properties for centuries. It was used by the Roman military doctor Proscurides as early as the 1st century AD and was included in medicinal elixirs during the Middle Ages to prevent diseases and ward off evil spirits.
- During the early modern period in Europe, St. John's Wort became known for its ability to treat nausea and other conditions. In his influential herbal book from the 17th century, Nicholas Culpeper wrote that St. John's wort could be used to treat bites and stings, kidney stones, spitting of blood caused by injuries, and vomiting.
- According to Susan Francia and Anne Stobart, St. John's Wort was used to heal wounds and fractures, as well as to alleviate fainting spells and reduce fever in medieval Europe. They note that a French physician's Latin medieval treatise referred to St. John's Wort as cleansing wounds or ulcers and promoting cicatrization or wound closure.
- Furthermore, Dr. Christopher Hobbs stated that Native Americans used the plant for various purposes, such as aiding dermatological conditions, inducing abortion, reducing fever, stopping bleeding, treating diarrhea, treating snake bites, and strengthening the body.
- St. John's Wort has been commonly used to treat anxiety and depression. It has also been used to treat menopause and premenstrual syndrome.

Modern research:

- St. John's wort is a cost-effective alternative to generic antidepressants for treating mild to moderate depression, with reduced adverse effects and improved outcomes.(349)
- A 2012 study suggests that hydroalcoholic extract of St. John's wort could be useful for reducing high cholesterol and arterial plaque buildup.(350)
- Using St. John's wort effectively reduces hot flashes, depression, and other menopausal symptoms in postmenopausal women.(351)

Side Effects:

St. John's Wort may interact with certain medications, including antidepressants, birth control pills, and blood thinners. It can also cause dry mouth, dizziness, fatigue, and stomach upset. Nursing or pregnant women should not use St. John's Wort, as it may harm the developing fetus or infant.

Parts used:

Flowers, leaves, and stems

Dried St. John's wort

Preparations:

St. John's Wort is available in capsules, tablets, teas, and tinctures. It can also be applied topically as an oil or ointment.

Dosage:

Adults take St. John's wort extract orally at 600-900 mg daily, divided into 2-3 doses, for 12 weeks.

Synergies:

★★★★★

St. John's wort, Arnica, Calendula, and Comfrey

A preparation of equal parts of arnica, calendula, St. John's wort, and comfrey extracts (diluted 1:100) has been shown to promote faster wound healing (a homeopathic medicine named Similasan® Arnica plus Spray).(352)

★★★

St. John's wort and Passionflower

Using a small amount of St. John's wort extract along with passionflower extract,may be beneficial for the treatment of depression.(353)

Fragaria × ananassa

Strawberry

The strawberry, a bright red, heart-shaped berry, is known for its sweet flavor and aroma. This perennial plant produces small white flowers, followed by the familiar red fruits, each adorned with tiny, yellow seeds on its surface.

Enhances Heart Health and Immunity

Once called 'Fragaria' for their fragrant nature, strawberries have been cherished since Roman times for their medicinal and nutritional qualities. They were a symbol of Venus, the goddess of love, due to their heart shape and red color, and have been used historically to improve heart health and boost immunity.

Region:

Originally found in temperate regions across Europe, strawberries are now cultivated globally in a variety of climates, thriving best in cooler, temperate zones.

Ancient Uses:

- Heart's Ally: Ancient herbalists prized strawberries for strengthening the heart and improving cardiovascular health.
- Immune Booster: Their high vitamin C content has been tapped for immune support since the Middle Ages.
- Digestive Aid: Strawberries were used to help digestion and alleviate gastrointestinal discomfort.
- Skin Enhancer: Crushed strawberries were applied to the skin to improve complexion and treat blemishes and sunburn.

Modern research:

- Strawberries are rich in polyphenols, which produce anti-inflammatory, neuroprotective, and antiproliferative effects. (696)
- Strawberries contain natural antioxidants, phenolic substances, and vitamin C, contributing to their high nutritional quality and various health benefits.(697)
- Strawberry consumption may provide health benefits such as prevention of inflammation disorders, oxidative stress, thereduction of obesity related disorders, heart disease risk, and protection against various types of cancer.(698)

Side Effects:

Strawberries are generally safe, but they can cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Also, their high acidity can be irritating to those with sensitive stomachs or acid reflux.

Parts used:

The fruit and leaves

Fresh strawberries

Preparations:

Fresh strawberries can be eaten raw, added to salads, or used in cooking and baking. Dried strawberries and leaves can be used to make teas and infusions. Strawberry extracts and oils are also available for culinary and medicinal uses.

Dosage:

- Dietary: Incorporate a handful of strawberries into your daily diet to reap their health benefits. Enjoy them fresh, in smoothies, or as part of desserts.
- Tea: Steep 1 teaspoon of dried strawberry leaves in hot water for 5-10 minutes. Drink 1-2 cups daily for digestive health and immune support.
- Topical: Apply crushed strawberries directly to the skin as a natural treatment for sunburn and skin irritation, or use strawberry-infused skincare products.

Synergies:

★★★★

Strawberry and Cocoa chocolate

Combining strawberry and 88% cocoa chocolate enhances the antioxidant activity of both cocoa and strawberry, which may protect your cells against free radicals, which may play a role in heart disease, cancer, and other diseases. (699)

Rhus aromatica, R. glabra, and R. hirta

Sumac

Antioxidant Rich, Supports Blood Sugar Balance

Smooth sumac is a 15-foot tall deciduous shrub with white stems and long leaves that turn deep red in autumn. Fragrant sumac has three leaflets, while staghorn sumac is similar in appearance but slightly taller.

Sumac, or sumach, a floral clan of around 35 species in the cashew family, includes fragrant (R. aromatica), smooth (R. glabra), and staghorn (R. hirta) sumac. Its name, meaning 'red' in multiple languages, reflects its fiery essence. With various uses as a dye, medicinal plant, and spice, sumac might be linked to Ancient Greek origins.

Region:

These plants grow in subtropical and temperate climates. They can be found in Africa, Asia, the Mediterranean, and North America.

Ancient Uses:

- Sumac gets its name from the Aramaic word "summaq," which means "dark red."
- Sumac was a well-known medicine and spice among the Greeks more than 2,000 years ago. Greek physician Pedanius Dioscorides wrote about its anti-flatulent and diuretic properties.
- Before lemons made their way into Europe, the Romans used sumac to make certain dishes taste tangy. It has been used by cooks and traditional healers ever since.
- In North America, parts of smooth sumac have been used by Native American tribes to treat asthma, blisters, colds, ear and eye problems, heart ailments, rashes, sore throats, tuberculosis, and ulcers. They also used it as an astringent and mouthwash. Staghorn sumac parts were also used in similar medicinal remedies.
- The Natchez people used the root of fragrant sumac to treat boils. The Ojibwa people made a decoction of fragrant sumac root to stop diarrhea.
- The berries, inner bark, leaves, and roots of smooth and staghorn sumac were also used to make dyes of various colors. The leaves of fragrant, smooth, and staghorn sumac were mixed with tobacco and smoked by many tribes. This mixture was dubbed "kinnikinnick."
- Native Americans also used the spice to make beverages. The Cherokee people made a juice called "quallah" with it. Quallah is a pink juice with a tart, lemony flavor.

Modern research:

- Studies have found that sumac is safe for human consumption and has little toxicity. Additionally, increasing evidence suggests that sumac has numerous beneficial effects, such as antibacterial, anticancer, antidiabetic, antinociceptive, cardioprotective, and neuroprotective properties.(354)
- Sumac has many health benefits, including the ability to balance blood sugar levels, fight free radical, lower cholesterol, prevent bone depletion, soothe muscle aches, and even potentially fight cancer.(355)
- A study on obese and overweight patients revealed that supplementing with sumac may improve insulin resistance and lead to weight loss, which may also be beneficial for diabetes prevention and control.(356)

Side Effects:

Sumac is generally safe but may cause allergic reactions in certain people. Poison sumac can cause inflamed, itchy hives. People should never ingest it. It may be difficult for the untrained to differentiate between sumac and poison sumac, so don't forage for your sumac.

Parts used:

Red berries

Fresh and crushed sumac berries

Preparations:

Sumac is available as supplement in capsule, tea, or tincture form.

Dosage:

Clinical research has demonstrated that doses of up to 3 grams daily are safe.

Synergies:

★★★★

Sumac, Rosemary, Ginger, Boswellia

The topical application of rosemary, ginger, sumac, and boswellia extracts is able to effectively treat muscle and joint pain.(357)

Helianthus annuus

Sunflower Seeds

Sunflower seeds are the fruits of the sunflower plant. These seeds are encased in tear-shaped black and white striped shells, known as hulls. The kernels inside are a rich golden color and have a mild, nutty flavor.

Boosts Heart Health and Promotes Healthy Skin

Sunflower seeds were a vital food source for Native Americans, who utilized them for their nutritional and medicinal properties. Russian folk medicine also recognized these seeds for their health benefits, particularly for heart and skin health.

Region:

Native to North America, sunflower seeds are now cultivated globally, thriving in sunny, well-drained soils.

Ancient Uses:

- Heart Helper: Packed with vitamin E, magnesium, and healthy fats, these seeds were traditionally used to support cardiovascular health.
- Skin Reviver: Their rich vitamin E content makes them a natural choice for maintaining healthy, glowing skin.
- Energy Booster: Native Americans used sunflower seeds as a convenient energy source during long journeys.
- Mood Enhancer: The high tryptophan content in sunflower seeds was recognized for its mood-lifting properties.
- Digestive Aid: These seeds are a good fiber source, aiding in digestion and promoting gut health.

Modern research:

- Sunflower-seed oil reduces serum cholesterol and may improve cardiovascular health.(684)
- Sunflower seeds contain substances like fatty acids, sterols, phenolic compounds, and dietary fiber, which are able to increase satiety and obesity control.(685)
- Sunflower seed extract features more antioxidants than other superfood seeds, potentially benefiting gastrointestinal health and much more.(686)
- Sunflower seeds have antioxidant, anticancer, anti-inflammatory, antihypertensive, skin-protective, hypocholesterolemic, analgesic, and antibacterial activities, and are used in constipation, dysentery, and urinary problems.(687)

Parts used:

The kernels (seeds) inside the hulls.

Dry bark of slippery elm

Side Effects:

Overeating sunflower seeds can lead to unwanted weight gain. They also contain cadmium, which can be harmful in large quantities. Individuals with a seed allergy should avoid sunflower seeds.

Preparations:

Sunflower seeds can be eaten raw, roasted, or used as an ingredient in various dishes. They can be sprinkled on salads, incorporated into granola or energy bars, or ground into sunflower seed butter. Sunflower oil is also a popular cooking oil.

Dosage:

- Oral: A healthy daily serving is about 1/4 cup (30 grams) of sunflower seeds. They can be eaten alone as a snack or added to meals for extra flavor and nutrition.
- Topical: Sunflower oil can be applied directly to the skin for hydration and to improve skin health, or used as a base in homemade skincare products.

Synergies:

★★★★★

Sunflower, Pumpkin, Watermelon, and Flaxseeds

Sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, watermelon seeds, and roasted flaxseeds can be eaten together as part of a diverse and nutritious diet. Combining different seeds can provide a variety of essential nutrients, including healthy fats, protein, vitamins, and minerals. Seeds mix can provide you with both soluble and insoluble fibre and therefore improve your gut health and bowel movement as well as help lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels in the body.(688)

Melaleuca alternifolia

Tea Tree

Antimicrobial and Skin Health Support

A tall, slender tree with paper-like bark and spear-shaped leaves. The clusters of snowy white flowers that bloom on its branches give birth to the powerful tea tree oil that we know and love today.

Tea tree renowned for its potent antimicrobial properties and refreshing scent, tea tree oil has secured its place in the pantheon of essential oils and natural health remedies.

Region:

Tea Tree is a native of the swampy Southeast Australian coast. It thrives in warm, wet climates where it towers as a testament to nature's resilience and diversity.

Ancient Uses:

- Indigenous Australians, like the Bundjalung people, traditionally used tea tree for healing by inhaling crushed leaves for coughs and applying poultices for wounds and skin issues.
- Tea tree oil is renowned for its antimicrobial properties, traditionally applied topically for acne, fungal infections, cuts, and wounds.
- Tea tree oil, believed to have anti-inflammatory effects, is used for promoting healthy skin, calming irritation, and improving overall skin appearance.
- Commonly found in hair care products, tea tree oil is used for potential benefits on the scalp, addressing issues like dandruff, itching, and promoting a healthy environment for hair growth.

Modern research:

- Tea tree oil has noteworthy antibacterial capabilities and hypo-allergenic properties.(535)
- Tea tree oil has antimicrobial properties that can be used to fight skin diseases caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites.(536)
- Tea tree may have a beneficial effect on periodontopathogens, dental plaque, gingivitis, periodontitis, and inflammatory responses. Its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties could potentially be beneficia lfor oral health.(537)

Parts used:

The leaves and twigs of the Tea Tree are steam-distilled to extract the potent essential oil.

Preparations:

- Essential Oil: The concentrated oil can be used topically for skin issues or diffused for air purification and respiratory support. Always dilute with a carrier oil (like coconut or jojoba oil) before topical application. For diffusing, follow your diffuser's instructions.
- Creams and Lotions: Infused in skincare products for its antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory benefits. Use as directed.
- Shampoos and Soaps: Added to personal care products for its cleansing properties and refreshing scent.

Fresh and dried tea tree leaves and essential oil

Synergies:

★★★

Tea tree and Lavender

Tea tree and lavender essential oils possess antifungal activity against common causes of tinea infection. (538)

★★★

Tea tree and Clove

Tea tree and clove essential oils show significant synergistic antibacterial properties.(539)

★★★★

Tea tree and Turmeric

The herbal cream containing turmeric and tea tree oil shows excellent microbicidal activity against various skin pathogens, making it a promising topical treatment for various skin infections.(540)

Thymus vulgaris

Thyme

Thyme is a perennial herb with small, woody stems and delicate, fragrant leaves. It produces tiny, pink, or purple flowers.

Respiratory Relief, Antioxidant Powerhouse

Thyme's pungent flavor enhances meats, veggies, and soups, while its medicinal properties treat respiratory issues like asthma and bronchitis. It's also renowned for its antibacterial and antioxidant powers. The name 'Thyme' traces back to the Greek 'thumos', embodying spiritedness or courage.

Region:

Thyme is native to the Mediterranean region but is now widely cultivated in many parts of the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Thyme has a rich history, from being associated with fairies to embalming mummies in ancient Egypt.
- It was used as a pain reliever for treating skin conditions and had antiseptic and toning properties for skin cleansing and tightening.
- Romans believed thyme could cure poisoning and considered it a symbol of courage for soldiers.
- In England during the Middle Ages, thyme was brewed as a tea and used to treat coughs and respiratory infections. It was a popular spice in cooking and used to treat those infected by the Black Death.
- In the Victorian Era, thyme solutions were applied to bandages for wounds.
- Digestive health: Thyme was believed to have carminative properties that prevent gas formation in the intestines.
- Respiratory health: In ancient Rome, it was used to treat respiratory problems like bronchitis and coughs due to its antispasmodic properties, which help relax muscles in the respiratory tract.

Modern research:

- Thyme has many potential health benefits, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, respiratory, and neurological effects.(358)
- Thyme extract is effective at protecting the kidneys from damage caused by pollutants. It does this by reducing the harmful effects of oxidative stress and inflammation.(359)

Side Effects:

Thyme can cause digestive issues. Overuse of thyme oil can lead to hypotension, a condition characterized by an abnormal drop in blood pressure. Furthermore, applying thyme topically can result in allergic contact dermatitis.

Parts used:

Flowers and leaves

Thyme leaves

Preparations:

Thyme can be used dried or fresh and produce essential oils for aromatherapy. Additionally, it is available in dietary supplements, either in liquid or capsule form. Thyme is also used in other applications such as teas, mouthwashes, face masks, and nasal sprays.

Dosage:

Capsules containing thyme usually consist of powdered leaves and are typically prescribed in doses ranging from 250 to 500 milligrams (mg) per day. Thyme can be used in cooking in normal amounts.

Synergies:

★★★

Thyme and Anise

A combination of thyme and anise essential oils, as well as methanolic extracts of thyme and anise contain antibacterial properties for combating bacterial infections.(360)

★★★

Thyme and Oregano

A combination of thyme and oregano essential oils produce antibacterial activity and may be applied topically to prevent bacterial infections.(361)

★★★★

Thyme and Cinnamon

The combination of cinnamon and thyme essential oils can be diffused to promote respiratory health and alleviate symptoms of colds or congestion. These oils can be added to homemade cleaning solutions to disinfect surfaces and create a pleasant scent in your home.(362)

Tribulus terrestris

Tribulus Terrestris

Tribulus terrestris is a low-growing, flowering plant with hairy stems and leaflets in pairs or triplets. It bears yellow flowers and produces a fruit covered with spines.

Vitality and Male Health Enhancer

Known for its sharp, spiky fruits, Tribulus terrestris has been used in traditional medicine systems for centuries. Often referred to as 'puncture vine' due to its hard, spiked fruits, it is famous for its potential benefits related to male health, vitality, and athletic performance.

Region:

Tribulus terrestris is a plant that grows in various regions around the world, including parts of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Ancient Uses:

- In traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine, Tribulus terrestris has been used to enhance vitality and sexual health, support heart health, and as a diuretic. In Ayurveda, it is also considered a mood enhancer.
- Tribulus terrestris is often used to support hormonal balance, particularly in men. It is believed to increase testosterone levels, which may have positive effects on muscle growth, strength, and overall vitality.
- Tribulus terrestris has been used by athletes and fitness enthusiasts for potential performance-enhancing benefits. It is believed to improve endurance, muscle strength, and recovery.

Modern research:

- Tribulus terrestris, used in Ayurveda for urinary diseases, has shown potential to inhibit crystal formation and growth, showing potential as a phytotherapeutic agent against urolithiasis.(541)
- Tribulus terrestris can protect against haloperidol-induced catalepsy in albino mice, suggesting its potential use in preventing the drug's extrapyramidal side effects.(542)
- Tribulus terrestris is used for its analgesic and anti-inflammatory effects, particularly its notable influence on preventing edema formation.(543)
- Tribulus terrestris could serve as a safe alternative treatment to current methods for managing motility dysfunction in males. (544)

Parts used:

Fruit, leaf, and root

Tribulus terrestris fruits

Preparations:

Tribulus Terrestris can be consumed as a tea, extract, powder, or in capsule form. It is also a common ingredient in many dietary supplements targeted toward enhancing athletic performance or sexual health. A common dosage might be 250-750 mg per day in divided doses.

Side Effects:

While Tribulus Terrestris is generally considered safe for most people when used short-term, it may cause side effects like stomach pain, cramping, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, constipation, insomnia, or menstrual irregularities in some people.

Dry tribulus terrestris leaves

Synergies:

★★★★

Tribulus terrestris and Spanish chamomile

Combining Tribulus terrestris and Spanish chamomile (Pellitory) extracts improves fertility in male animal models.(545)

★★★★★

Tribulus terrestris in water

Soak Tribulus terrestris in water overnight and drink it to avoid kidney stones. This extract improves the health of the kidneys by preventing the crystalization of calcium oxalate.(546)

Trametes versicolor

Turkey Tail Mushroom

Turkey tail mushrooms are bracket fungi with a semi-circular or 'turkey tail' shape and a multicolored, velvety surface featuring concentric rings.

Immune Support and Cancer Adjunct Therapy

Named for its resemblance to the tail of a wild turkey, turkey tail mushrooms have been used for centuries in traditional medicine, particularly in Asia. They're highly valued for their medicinal properties, especially their immune-supporting benefits.

Region:

Turkey tail mushrooms are found all over the world, primarily in woodland areas, growing on dead or fallen logs.

Ancient Uses:

- In traditional Chinese medicine, turkey tail mushrooms have been used to boost the immune system, promote digestive health, and enhance stamina. They have also been used in Japanese and Korean traditional medicine.
- Turkey tail mushrooms have been extensively studied for their potential benefits in cancer support. They contain compounds, including polysaccharopeptides, that exhibit anti-tumor and anti-cancer activities. They may help modulate the immune response, inhibit cancer cell growth, and enhance the effects of conventional cancer treatments.
- Turkey tail mushrooms are rich in antioxidants, such as phenols and flavonoids, which help combat oxidative stress and reduce inflammation in the body. These properties contribute to their potential benefits for overall health and well-being.

Modern research:

- Turkey tail mushroom extracts are shown to increase the lifespan of those with gastrointestinal cancers.(547)
- Turkey tail mushrooms possess substantial antioxidative and cytotoxic activity.(548)
- Dietary mushroom inclusion improves growth performance and feed efficiency in animal models, while also enhancing intestinal microbiota composition and antioxidant status.(549)
- Turkey tail mushroom has anti-cancer and anti-viral properties, and stimulates the immune system.(550)

Parts used:

The fruiting body of the turkey tail mushroom is used for medicinal purposes.

Preparations:

Turkey tail mushrooms can be consumed in various forms. They are often dried and used in teas or soups. They're also commonly found in capsule or tablet form, and as a liquid extract. A common dosage might be 1-3 grams per day in divided doses.

Side Effects:

Turkey tail mushrooms are generally considered safe with few side effects, but they may cause digestive upset in some individuals.

Turkey tail mushroom fruiting body

Synergies:

★★★

Turkey tail mushrooms and yellowing curtain crusts

Turkey tail mushrooms and yellowing curtain crusts have strong natural antioxidants and antiproliferative agents that work together to improve overall antioxidant benefits.(551)

Curcuma longa

Turmeric

Turmeric is a perennial herb with large, oblong leaves and an underground stem (rhizome) often used as a spice. The rhizome is bright orange-yellow and has a tough, knobbly exterior. It produces small, white, yellow, or pink-purple flowers.

Anti-Inflammatory, Aids Digestive Health

Turmeric, a prized spice in Indian and Middle Eastern cuisine, addresses digestive problems, skin ailments, and inflammation with its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial properties. The name 'Turmeric' comes from 'terra merita,' Latin for 'meritorious earth,' a tribute to its striking yellow pigment.

Region:

Turmeric is native to the tropical areas of South and Southeast Asia. It is now widely cultivated in many tropical and subtropical regions worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Ancient Indian texts have mentioned use of turmeric for wound healing. Archaeological analysis of pots discovered near New Delhi, India showed evidence of turmeric, ginger, and garlic residue dating back to 2500 BCE.
- Around 500 BCE, turmeric became vital in Ayurvedic medicine. It was used for various purposes: fumes for congestion relief, juice for wound healing, and paste for skin issues like chickenpox and smallpox.
- Turmeric was used as a natural dye for skin and clothing. Due to its yellow-orange color, it is also known as "Indian saffron" and can be used as a substitute for saffron because it is cheaper and similar in color.
- Turmeric was believed to prevent gas formation in the intestines.

Modern research:

- Turmeric oil helps to improve health due to its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antinociceptive properties.(363)
- Turmeric or curcumin products, whether applied topically or ingested, may have therapeutic benefits for skin conditions such as acne, alopecia, atopic dermatitis, facial photoaging, oral lichen planus, pruritus, psoriasis, radiodermatitis, and vitiligo.(364)
- A 2018 study indicates that turmeric extract may have neuroprotective properties to promote better brain health, potentially mediated through its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.(365)

Side Effects:

Turmeric is safe in normal food amounts but can trigger allergies and interact with specific medications, like blood thinners and diabetes drugs. Avoid large doses to prevent nausea, diarrhea, and stomach pain.

Parts used:

Rhizome

Turmeric rhizome

Preparations:

Turmeric is commonly used fresh or dried in cooking. It can also be taken as a supplement in capsule or powder form.

Dosage:

Taking 500-2000 mg of turmeric daily may have positive effects, especially in extract form.

Synergies:

★★★★

Turmeric and Fennel

The combination of turmeric extract and fennel essential oil taken twice daily for two months improves the symptoms and quality of life of patients with inflammatory bowel disease by relieving various symptoms such as bloating.(366)

★★★★★

Turmeric and Black pepper

The combination of black pepper and turmeric may be an effective malaria treatment. Piperine from black pepper (Piper nigrum seeds) enhances the bioavailability of curcumin in turmeric by 2000% in humans thus allowing for greater turmeric-based benefits.(367)

★★★★★

Turmeric, Dandelion, Olive, and Nettle, and Milk thistle

Combining extracts from turmeric, dandelion, olive leaf, and nettle leaf with 2 milk thistle capsules half an hour before breakfast for 5 consecutive months has shown significant improvement in reducing psoriasis severity and improving skin health.(368)

★★★★

Turmeric, Boswellia, and Licorice

The combination of turmeric with boswellia and licorice is effective at reducing symptoms of asthma.(369)

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi

Uva Ursi

Uva ursi is a low-growing, evergreen shrub. It has small, thick, leathery leaves, pink or white bell-shaped flowers, and produces bright red berries.

Urinary Tract Health and Antioxidant Support

Uva Ursi, also known as bearberry, has been utilized in traditional medicine systems for centuries due to its antiseptic and astringent properties. Its leaves are particularly valued for their ability to support urinary tract health.

Region:

Uva ursi is native to the colder regions of the Northern Hemisphere, including North America, Europe, and Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Indigenous peoples of North America traditionally used Uva Ursi to treat urinary tract infections, kidney stones, and related conditions. It was also used in traditional European medicine for similar purposes.
- Uva Ursi contains antioxidants that help protect cells from oxidative stress and damage. These antioxidants, including polyphenols, may contribute to its potential health benefits and overall antioxidant support in the body.
- Uva Ursi has been traditionally used for its potential anti-inflammatory properties. It may help reduce inflammation in the urinary tract and other areas of the body.

Modern research:

- Bearberry leaves are rich in phenols and antioxidants.(552)
- Bearberry leaf extract shows potential as an antidiabetic and liver-protective agent by reducing oxidative stress and improving carbohydrate metabolism.(553)

Parts used:

The leaves of the Uva Ursi plant are used for medicinal purposes.

Preparations:

Uva Ursi leaves can be prepared as a tea or decoction. They are also often dried and powdered for use in capsules or tablets, and in tincture or extract form. A common dosage might be 1.5 to 4 grams of dried leaves steeped in boiling water to make a tea, consumed up to 3 times a day.

Fresh uva ursi branch with fruits

Dry uva ursi leaves

Side Effects:

While Uva Ursi is generally considered safe for short-term use, its active compound, hydroquinone, can be toxic in high doses or with long-term use. It is also not recommended for use during pregnancy or by individuals with kidney disease.

Synergies:

★★★★

Uva ursi and Juniper

Uva-ursi leaves can be combined with juniper leaves for their urinary antiseptic and anti-adhesion properties.(554)

★★★★

Uva ursi and Elderberry

Uva ursi extracts can be combined with elderberry extracts according to a 1:1 ratio, to increase urine flow and urinary sodium excretion, which can help treat urinary tract infections.(555)

Valeriana officinalis

Valerian

Valerian is a perennial herb with an upright stem up to 1.5m (5 feet) tall and small pink or white flowers. The deeply-lobed leaves have a distinctive, musky odor, but the flower has a sweet smell.

Promotes Sleep, Eases Anxiety, and Supports Digestion

For centuries, valerian has been a go-to solution for insomnia, anxiety, and digestive troubles. Valerian is available in capsules, tinctures, and teas, making it accessible in various forms. Let Valerian's calming properties lull you into relaxation and bring relief to your mind and body.

Region:

Valerian is native to Europe and Asia but is now widely cultivated in many parts of the world, including North America and Australia.

Ancient Uses:

- Valerian has been used in China, Egypt, Greece, and many European countries for centuries in creating an ointment to address sleep issues.
- Additionally, during the 18th and 19th centuries, valerian was used in Europe as a standard anticonvulsant treatment for epilepsy.
- Valerian was mentioned in Nicholas Culpeper's English Physician and Complete Herbal published in 1789.
- Valerian has been used to reduce anxiety and improve symptoms of anxiety disorders. Ancient herbalists often prescribed it for this purpose.
- Valerian treated digestive problems such as bloating and indigestion. It was believed to have carminative properties, which could help expel gas from the digestive tract.
- Valerian was often recommended as a natural remedy for women's health issues.

Modern research:

- A 2013 study determined that valerian extract has pain-relieving benefits thanks to positively affecting serotonin and dopamine levels.(370)
- A 2021 study investigating the safety of Valerian root as an herbal medicinal product for relieving mild nervous tension and sleep disorders found satisfactory results regarding lead and cadmium impurities. This means it is safe to use in an attempt to treat sleep-related issues.(371)

Side Effects:

Some people have reported mild side effects from its use, such as dizziness, headaches, restlessness, and stomach upset. Valerian root can cause drowsiness, so avoid driving or operating machinery after taking it.

Parts used:

Root

Preparations:

Valerian is typically taken orally as a capsule supplement or as a tincture or tea. To make valerian root tea, steep 2 to 3 grams of dried valerian root in 1 cup of hot water for 10 to 15 minutes.

Dosage:

Research suggests taking 300 to 600 mg of valerian root for insomnia or sleep problems 30 minutes to two hours before bed. When using valerian root to alleviate anxiety, take 120 to 200 mg three times per day, with the last dose taken right before bedtime. Take it regularly for two weeks to obtain maximum benefit. Don't take it for more than a month without consulting a doctor.

Valerian root

Synergies:

★★★

Valerian and Lemon balm

A combination of Valerian root and lemon balm shows a significantly higher quality of sleep when taken for 30 days.(372)

★★★

Valerian and Hops

A single dose of valerian and hops fluid extract effectively improves sleep quantity and quality in poor sleepers.(373)

Verbena officinalis

Vervain

A tall, slender plant with pointed, lanceolate leaves and small, delicate flowers arranged in slender spikes.

Neurological and Women's Health Support

Vervain, an herb steeped in myth, folklore, and traditional medicine. Revered as a 'herb of the gods' by the ancient Romans and Greeks, vervain has long been celebrated for its diverse healing powers.

Region:

Vervain, also known as Ma Bian Cao in Chinese, is native to Europe and Asia but can be found flourishing in various parts of the world today, from the United States to North Africa.

Ancient Uses:

- Vervain was used in Roman divine rituals, while druids considered it one of their most sacred herbs. In traditional medicine, it's been used to soothe the nervous system, support digestion, and promote liver health.
- It has been traditionally used for women's health concerns. It is believed to have properties that may help regulate menstrual cycles, alleviate menstrual cramps, and support overall reproductive health.
- Vervain has been used traditionally as a fever-reducing herb. It is believed to have cooling properties that may help reduce fever and associated symptoms.

Modern research:

- Vervain has properties that can be beneficial for neurological issues, including epilepsy, anxiety, and insomnia.(556)
- Vervain extract Can reduce tumors in vivo without affecting the immune system.(557)
- Vervain has antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, neuroprotective, anticancer, analgesic, and anticonvulsant properties.(558)

Parts used:

The aerial (above-ground) parts of the Vervain plant are used, particularly the leaves and flowering tops, for their concentration of beneficial compounds.

Fresh aerial parts

Dry vervain aerial parts

Preparations:

- Tea: The dried herb can be steeped to create a bitter yet calming tea. One cup of Vervain tea can be consumed 1-3 times per day.
- Tincture: A concentrated liquid extract that captures the herb's beneficial compounds. Use as directed.
- Capsules: Provide a taste-free and convenient way to incorporate Vervain into your wellness routine. Use as recommended.

Ammi visnaga

Visnaga

Visnaga is an annual plant that grows to about 1 meter in height. It has feathery leaves and clusters of small white flowers.

Respiratory and Kidney Health Enhancer

Visnaga, also known as Khella, has been used for centuries in traditional medicine for its potent muscle-relaxant and vasodilatory properties. It's particularly known for its benefits in managing conditions such as asthma and kidney stones.

Region:

Visnaga is native to the Mediterranean region, particularly Egypt, and is now found in various parts of Europe, Asia, and North Africa.

Ancient Uses:

- Ancient Egyptians used visnaga to treat kidney diseases.
- It was also used in traditional medicine to alleviate the symptoms of angina and respiratory conditions like asthma, due to its ability to dilate the bronchial, urinary and blood vessels.
- Visnaga is known for its potential anti-inflammatory properties. It may help reduce inflammation in the body, particularly in the respiratory and urinary systems.
- Visnaga has been traditionally used as an antispasmodic herb. It is believed to help relax smooth muscles and reduce spasms, making it useful for conditions such as muscle cramps, menstrual cramps, and urinary tract spasms.

Modern research:

- Visnaga shows promise as a potential source of antioxidants for the prevention of diseases linked to free radicals.(559)
- Visnaga has potential in managing diabetes by regulating the pre-diabetic status and regulating blood sugar levels. (560)
- Visnaga extract demonstrates effective and safe potential for the treatment of hyperacidity conditions and peptic ulcers. (561)

Parts used:

The dried ripe fruits (seeds) of the Visnaga plant are used for medicinal purposes.

Dry visnaga fruits

A cluster of visnaga flowers

Preparations:

Visnaga can be prepared as a tea or infusion. About 1-2 teaspoons of crushed seeds are steeped in boiling water for 10-15 minutes, taken three times daily.

It's also used in dried form, in capsules, and as a tincture. Daily recommended dose from visnaga fruit ranges from 0.05 to 0.15 g.

Juglans regia

Walnut

Walnuts are the nut of any tree in the genus Juglans. A walnut is the edible seed of a drupe, and thus not a true botanical nut. They are rounded, single-seeded stone fruits with a hard shell and a sweet, oily nut inside.

Boosts Brain Health and Manages Heart Risks

Since ancient times, walnuts have been valued for their brain-boosting properties, often symbolized as a sign of intellectuality due to their brain-like shape. Greek and Roman texts cite walnuts for enhancing cognitive functions. In traditional Chinese medicine, walnuts were believed to nourish the brain and 'warm the blood.'

Region:

Originally from the region stretching from the Balkans eastward to the Himalayas and southwest China, walnuts have spread across the globe, flourishing in temperate climates of North America, Europe, and Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- Brain Booster: Historically, walnuts were believed to enhance brain function and were recommended by herbalists for boosting memory and concentration.
- Heart Helper: Ancient practitioners recognized walnuts for their heart-protective qualities, using them to manage cholesterol and blood pressure.
- Anti-inflammatory Agent: Known for their anti-inflammatory properties, walnuts were used in poultices and oils for soothing joint pains and swelling.

Modern research:

- Walnuts may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, type II diabetes, and certain cancers. It may also lessen the symptoms of age-related neurological disorders like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.(666)
- Walnuts are part of a heart-healthy diet, are able to lower blood cholesterol concentrations, and are able to reduce risks associated with heart disease. (667)
- Walnuts contain polyphenols, such as ellagitannins, which possess antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, thus having many disease-preventing and health-keeping benefits. (668)
- Walnuts contain a variety of bioactive compounds, including ellagitannins, which may play a role in maintaining health and preventing diseases like cancer, cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases. (669)

Parts used:

The nut meat inside the shell.

Walnuts

Side Effects:

Walnuts are generally safe but may cause allergic reactions in some individuals. Overconsumption can lead to digestive issues due to their high fiber content. Individuals with nut allergies should avoid walnuts.

Preparations:

Walnuts can be eaten raw, roasted, or incorporated into a variety of dishes. Ground walnuts are used to make walnut oil, a rich and flavorful culinary ingredient. Walnut milk can be an alternative to dairy, and walnuts are also used in baking, salads, and as toppings.

Dosage:

- Oral: Consume a handful (about 1oz or 28 grams) of walnuts daily as a snack, or incorporate them into meals for heart health and cognitive benefits.
- Topical: Walnut oil can be applied to the skin for its moisturizing properties, or used as a carrier oil in aromatherapy.

Synergies:

★★★★

Walnut and Fig

A fig and walnut mixture can help fight off harmful elements in your body, as it has higher polyphenol content and antioxidant activity due to its low moisture content.(670)

Nasturtium officinale

Watercress

Watercress is an aquatic perennial plant, notable for its small white flowers, hollow stems, and dark green, pinnately compound leaves.

Enhances Immunity, Improves Circulation, and Reduces Inflammation

For centuries, watercress has been esteemed for its health-boosting properties. This water-loving herb has been appreciated for its ability to invigorate the body and support overall health. Its peppery, tangy flavor is a hint of its rich vitamin and mineral content, including vitamins K, A, C, calcium, and iron.

Region:

Watercress thrives in slow-moving waterways such as streams, brooks, and ponds across Europe and Asia.

Ancient Uses:

- In the 19th century, watercress was used in a popular tonic for improving blood circulation and strengthening the immune system.
- Recognized for its blood-purifying properties, it was a common preventive measure against scurvy during long sea voyages.
- Traditional uses also include treatments for indigestion, kidney stones, skin diseases, anemia, constipation, and as a supplementary treatment in cancer.

Modern research:

- Watercress has positive effects on the immune system, hypoglycemic hypercholesterolemia, and sex hormone synthesis. It also displays anti-inflammatory properties and may be beneficial in preventing renal stone formation in animals.(640)
- Crude watercress extract shows significant protective effects against initiation, proliferation, and metastasis stages in human colon cancer cells.(641)
- A study showed that oral administration of 1% watercress extract to animal models may improve their immune system and enhance hematological parameters.(642)

Parts used:

Leaves and stems

Watercress leaves and stems

Side Effects:

While generally safe for consumption, watercress may cause stomach upset in some individuals. Due to its high vitamin K content, it should be used cautiously by those on blood thinners.

Dosage:

As a dietary supplement, fresh watercress can be consumed in salads or as a garnish. For specific conditions, consult a healthcare provider for appropriate dosage and form, whether as a tea, extract, or supplement.

Synergies:

★★★★

Watercress and Lemon

To alleviate internal edema and joint swelling, use watercress seeds by mixing them in water. For a targeted application, blend the seeds with lemon juice and apply the mixture to a cloth, securing it by tying it around the affected area. (643)

Paeonia lactiflora

White Peony

White peony is a perennial plant that grows to about 1 meter in height. It has large, deeply lobed leaves and produces large, fragrant white or pink flowers.

Women's Health and Liver Support

Known for its stunning flowers and medicinal properties, white peony has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for over a thousand years. It is particularly esteemed for its potential benefits for women's health and its calming properties.

Region:

The White Peony is native to East Asia, particularly China and is widely cultivated in many parts of the world.

Ancient Uses:

- In traditional Chinese medicine, white peony was used to nourish the blood, soothe the liver, alleviate pain, and regulate menstruation. It was also used to address conditions related to women's health, such as menstrual cramps and menopausal symptoms.
- White peony is known for its potential analgesic and muscle-relaxing properties. It is believed to help alleviate pain, including abdominal and muscle pain, and promote relaxation.
- White peony is commonly used in traditional medicine to support liver health. It is believed to have hepatoprotective properties, helping to protect the liver from damage and support its detoxification processes.
- White peony is known for its potential anti-inflammatory properties. It may help reduce inflammation in the body, including joint inflammation, and is often used to alleviate symptoms of conditions like arthritis.

Modern research:

- White peony demonstrates potential in treating Parkinson's disease by reducing neuroinflammation, inhibiting apoptosis, and improving motor and non-motor symptoms.(562)
- White peony holds promise as a potential treatment for depression in humans.(563)
- White peony may prevent human respiratory syncytial virus (HRSV) infection by inhibiting viral attachment and internalization, and by stimulating the secretion of interferon (IFN), which inhibits viruses.(564)

Parts used:

The root of the White Peony plant, specifically the lateral root known as 'Peony Root', is used for medicinal purposes.

Preparations:

White Peony can be prepared as a tea or decoction. It is also often dried and powdered for use in capsules or tablets and in tincture or extract form.A common dosage might be 4-8 grams per day of the dried root.

Side Effects:

White Peony may cause side effects such as stomach upset in some individuals. It is also not recommended for use during pregnancy.

Sliced fresh and dried white peony roots

Synergies:

★★★

White peony and Licorice

White peony and licorice provide liver-protecting benefits through complementary and synergistic mechanisms, preventing liver cell death and reducing immune and inflammation-mediated liver damage.(565)

Salix alba

White willow

White willow is a deciduous tree with long, slender branches and a high canopy. It has long, lance-shaped leaves and small, yellowish flowers. The bark is gray-brown and contains numerous lenticels (small, raised pores).

Natural Pain Reliever and Anti-Inflammatory

White Willow bark contains salicin, when converted to salicylic acid in the body, bears resemblance to aspirin's active ingredient. It has been used for centuries to reduce inflammation and relieve pain. White willow is available in capsules, tinctures, and teas, catering to individual preferences.

Region:

White willow is native to Europe, Asia, and North Africa, but it is now widely cultivated in many parts of the world, including North America and Australia.

Ancient Uses:

- The medicinal use of white willow bark dates back to ancient Greece and Egypt, but it wasn't until 1829 that the active ingredient, Salicin, was discovered. This discovery led to the development of the drug Aspirin.
- For more than 5,000 years, white willow bark has been used as an effective pain relief remedy. Ancient Egyptians used it to relieve inflammation and pain, and Dioscorides and Hippocrates recommended it for treating gout and rheumatic joint diseases.
- According to Celsus, another medical writer from ancient Rome, compresses or poultices made from willow could be used to treat a condition called prolapse, where the bowel or womb falls out of the body.
- White willow bark was used in ancient times to reduce fever and other symptoms of illness. It was believed to have antipyretic (fever-reducing) properties.

Modern research:

- Willow bark is able to improve lipid profiles, reduce elevated body weight and inhibit inflammatory metabolic responses associated with obesity.(374)
- Grinding willow bark significantly increases its antioxidant and anti-AChE properties due to the higher concentration of bioactive compounds. Antioxidants fight off harmful molecules in our bodies, while anti-AChE substances help keep our brains functioning well.(375)
- Willow bark extract,which contains salicin, is commonly used to treat painful rheumatological diseases like arthritis and back pain. Results have demonstrated the extract's efficacy in treating inflammation-related disorders.(376)

Side Effects:

In certain individuals, the use of white willow bark may cause diarrhea, heartburn, vomiting, and allergic responses, particularly in those who have an allergy to aspirin.

Parts used:

Bark

Preparations:

White willow bark is typically taken orally as a supplement in capsule form or as a tincture or tea.

Dosage:

Adults have commonly used white willow bark in dosages that provide 120-240 mg of salicin orally daily for up to 6 weeks. When making willow bark tea, the suggested dosage is one to two teaspoons of herbal powder per cup of boiling water up to 3 times per day. Do not exceed the suggested dose.

White willow bark

White willow bark chips

Synergies:

★★★

White willow, Nettle, and Rosehip

The combination of willow bark, nettle leaf, and rosehip extracts shows promise in reducing inflammation, protecting cartilage cells, and promoting new cartilage formation, potentially benefiting conditions like osteoarthritis.(377)

★★★

White willow and Coffee

Coffee and willow bark extracts produce antioxidant properties, potentially providing health benefits, such as increased antioxidant capabilities.(378)

Dioscorea villosa

Wild Yam

Wild yam is a perennial vine with knotty, woody rootstocks or tubers that are dry, crooked, and narrow. It also has long creeping runners and thin, reddish-brown stems that can reach over 30 feet in length.

Alleviates Menstrual Discomfort and Supports Hormonal Health

Wild yam, historically used by Native Americans for food and medicine, is now primarily a medicinal herb. Although it has traditional benefits, modern science has uncovered its mechanisms and expanded its pharmaceutical applications. There are over 600 wild yam species, but only around 12 are edible.

Region:

Wild yam is native to North America, particularly in Florida, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ontario, and Texas.

Ancient Uses:

- Wild yam has been used in China, Japan, and Southeast Asia for at least 2,000 years. It forms part of "The Pill of Eight Ingredients," traditionally prescribed in Chinese medicine to treat hypothyroidism and diabetes.
- Herbalists also prescribed it for chronic coughs, exhaustion, lack of appetite, thirst, and wheezing.
- The herb was popular with the ancient Aztec and Mayan people primarily as a source of food and for pain relief. Colonial doctors learned about this herb from Native Americans and used it as a treatment for epilepsy, rabies, and other ailments.
- In the 18th and 19th centuries, herbalists used wild yam to treat menstrual cramps and problems related to childbirth, as well as for coughs and upset stomachs.
- In the 1950s, scientists discovered that wild yam roots contain the plant-based estrogen (phytoestrogen) diosgenin, which can be chemically converted into a hormone called progesterone. Diosgenin was used to make the first birth control pills in the 1960s.
- Some people have used wild yam as a source of steroids.

Modern research:

- Wild yam has the potential to increase cholesterol metabolism, regular hormones, and also has anti-inflammatory and anti-allergy properties.(380)
- Select wild yam species, such as D. bulbifera, D. pubera, and D. pentaphylla, have high flavonoid and antioxidant contents, thus allowing for many health benefits.(381)

Side Effects:

Large doses of wild yam taken orally can cause vomiting. Nursing or pregnant women and those with reproductive cancer, endometriosis, or uterine fibroids should not take wild yam. It can interact with medications that contain estrogen, such as menopausal hormone replacement therapy.

Parts used:

Roots

Preparations:

Nowadays, wild yam comes in capsules, creams, liquid extracts, and powders. Diosgenin is available in various over-the-counter and prescription drugs.

Dosage:

The recommended dosage for wild yam extract powder is 400 mg once or twice a day. Take the supplement according to a physician's instructions.

Whole and chopped wild yam root

Hamamelis virginiana

Witch Hazel

Witch hazel typically grows 3-4.5 meters tall and can resemble a tree. Its flowers have long, narrow, crumpled petals that change from light to deep yellow as the plant matures. The leaves are long with wavy margins.

Soothes Skin Irritation and Acts as a Natural Astringent

Witch hazel extract, from its leaves, bark, and twigs, has a long history of soothing inflamed tissues and irritated skin. It continues to be a popular ingredient in lotions, soaps, and ointments. The name "witch hazel" has roots in folklore, as early settlers and natives used it for "water-witching" to find hidden water sourcess, thus, its name.

Region:

Witch hazel originated in eastern North America, specifically Canada and the Northeast coast of the United States. Today, it is commonly cultivated in Europe and temperate climates worldwide.

Ancient Uses:

- Witch hazel has been used to support human health for centuries. It is recognized as one of the few medicinal plants approved by the Food and Drug Administration as a non-prescription drug ingredient.
- It was even incorporated into the first mass-produced toiletries created in America, initially named Golden Treasure and later rebranded as Pond's Extract.
- The witch hazel has been used by Native Americans for various purposes. They made decoctions and infusions of its parts to treat bruises, cholera, and respiratory conditions, stimulate appetite and regulate the kidneys. The plant was also used as an antidiarrheal, emetic, and gynecological aid.
- Witch hazel is used to manufacture astringents to help tighten the skin. Witch hazel leaf extract, bark extract, and witch hazel water are often added to certain medications to help slow or stop bleeding. These medications treat various conditions, including hemorrhoids, insect bites, itching, minor pain, stings, and teething.

Modern research:

- A recent study provides evidence that witch hazel extract has strong antimicrobial, anti-toxin production, and anti-biofilm abilities on pathogenic microorganisms and might also be beneficial for maintaining healthy gut bacteria.(382)
- Witch hazel extract has been a key component in skin care products for many years. Recently, hexagalloylglucose, a compound in witch hazel extract has been used rto offer increased skin protection in various creams and lotions.(383)

Side Effects:

When applied topically, witch hazel is generally considered safe for most adults, although some may experience mild skin irritation. Ingesting small amounts of witch hazel is also likely safe for most adults but may cause stomach upset. However, taking large amounts of witch hazel orally could lead to liver problems.While witch hazel does contain safrole, a chemical that can cause cancer, the amount in witch hazel is negligible and, therefore, not a cause for concern.

Parts used:

The dried bark, leaves, and partially dormant twigs of witch hazel have been used to make witch hazel water.

Preparations:

You may see a product called witch hazel water (Hamamelis water, distilled witch hazel extract). It is a liquid distilled from dried leaves, bark, and partially dormant twigs of witch hazel.

Dosage:

A lotion containing 10% witch hazel water helps with sun-induced skin irritation. Witch hazel water can be used up to 6 times a day for hemorrhoids and anal discomfort. In kids aged 2-11, witch hazel ointment eases skin irritation with several daily applications.

Chopped witch hazel bark

Synergies:

★★★

Witch hazel and Green tea

Witch-hazel and green tea extracts produce antimicrobial effects against staphylococci, bacteria that causes what is commonly known as a staph infection.(384)

Artemisia absinthium

Wormwood

Wormwood is a perennial shrub-like plant that grows up to 1.2 meters in height. It has silvery-green, feathery leaves and bears small, yellow flowers.

Digestive Health and Antioxidant Support

Noted for its strong, bitter taste and scent, wormwood has been used in traditional medicine for centuries. It is famously known as the primary ingredient in the alcoholic beverage absinthe, but has also been used for its potential health benefits, particularly for digestive ailments.

Region:

Wormwood is native to temperate regions of Europe, Asia, and North Africa, and has been naturalized in North America.

Ancient Uses:

- In traditional medicine systems, wormwood was used for its antiseptic, antispasmodic, and carminative properties. It was used to treat digestive disorders, including stomach pain, indigestion, and lack of appetite. It was also believed to expel worms, hence the name.
- Historical Use in Absinthe: Wormwood gained notoriety for its use in the production of the alcoholic drink called absinthe. Absinthe traditionally included wormwood along with other herbs and was renowned for its green color and alleged hallucinogenic effects. The use of wormwood in absinthe has been restricted or regulated in many countries due to safety concerns.

Modern research:

- Wormwood exhibits neuroprotective properties and could serve as an additional treatment for stroke patients.(566)
- Wormwood extract may have potential for modulating the immune response and may be used for treating immune disorders.(567)
- Wormwood extract has significant antiulcer and antioxidant properties.(568)

Parts used:

The above-ground parts of the wormwood plant, including the leaves and flowering tops, are used for medicinal purposes.

Fresh wormwood aerial parts

Dried aerial parts

Preparations:

Wormwood can be prepared in tea, tincture, or capsule form. It is also used as an essential oil.A common dosage might be 1-2 teaspoons of dried herb steeped in boiling water to make a tea, consumed up to 3 times a day.

Side Effects:

Wormwood is generally safe for short-term use, it contains the compound thujone which can be toxic in large amounts or with long-term use. It may cause restlessness, difficulty sleeping, and seizures. It is also not recommended for use during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Synergies:

★★★★

Wormwood, Lavender, and Rosemary

Wormwood, lavender, and rosemary essential oils allow for faster wound healing and antimicrobial benefits when combined.(569)

Achillea millefolium

Yarrow

Yarrow is an herbaceous perennial plant with slender, feathery leaves and clusters of small, white, pink, red, or yellow flowers. It grows to a height of about 1 m (3 feet).

Aids in Wound Healing and Offers Anti-Inflammatory Benefits

Yarrow, valued in various cultures, has been a remedy for wounds, infections, and digestive issues. Its astringent and anti-inflammatory properties aid in reducing inflammation and promoting healing. The name "Achillea" honors the Greek hero Achilles, who is said to have used this herb for battlefield wound care.

Region:

Yarrow is native to temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere in Asia, Europe, and North America, but it is now found throughout the world.

Ancient Uses:

- Yarrow's use dates back 60,000 years in Iraq, with fossilized pollen found in Neanderthal burial caves.
- Soldiers in the Trojan war and other battles used yarrow leaves to staunch bleeding wounds, earning it nicknames like "soldier's woundwort" and "warrior plant".
- Ancient China used yarrow to balance yin and yang energies and awaken spiritual forces of the mind. Yarrow stems served as a divination tool in the I-Ching dynasty.
- Native Americans used yarrow to reduce fever, pain, and inflammation, promote sleep, and repel flies. They boiled it in rituals to purify areas where sick people rested and cleanse them of any illness.
- Yarrow treated digestive problems with its carminative (gas-reducing) properties.
- Yarrow was used by some ancient cultures to regulate menstruation and ease cramps.

Modern research:

- Yarrow essential oils have inhibitory effects against various common disease-causing pathogens.(385)
- Essential oil from yarrow flowers and leaves shows strong antioxidant and antimicrobial properties, with flowers showing stronger activity than leaves. (386)
- Yarrow, containing flavonoids, kaempferol, luteolin, and apigenin, shows potential in treating neurodegenerative disorders like epilepsy, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, and stroke. (387)
- Yarrow tea has antiviral and anti-inflammatory properties, potentially treating COVID-19-induced lung inflammation. (388)

Side Effects:

Yarrow products with thujone can be toxic in high doses. Stick to 250-500 mg daily for up to a year.

Parts used:

Leaves, flowers, and stem

Preparations:

Adults mainly use yarrow as a plant extract or tea, but it's also applied topically as ointment, cream, or used as a gargle.

Dosage:

Yarrow has been used at 4.5 g per day. But there is no clinical research to support this dosage.

Dry yarrow flowers

Synergies:

★★★

Yarrow, Wormwood, and Walnut

A combination of yarrow, wormwood, and walnut leaf extracts is able to eliminate Leishmania major, a parasitic protozoan responsible for leishmaniasis.(389)

★★★★

Yarrow, Cinnamon, and Rosemary

Bath treatments using a combination of yarrow, cinnamon, and rosemary distilled plant waters have potential anti-bacterial and immune-strengthening benefits. (390)

★★★

Yarrow and Marigold

Plant extracts from yarrow and marigold show synergistic effects when combined with the chemotherapy drug 5-Fluororacil, suggesting the potential for these extracts to enhance the effectiveness of conventional pancreatic cancer treatments.(391)

Yogurt

Yogurt is a dairy product created by fermenting milk with a yogurt culture. The texture varies from creamy to thick, and it can range from tangy to mildly sweet.

Promotes Gut Health and Strengthens Immune System

Yogurt's roots trace back to 5000 BC in Mesopotamia. It's said that herdsmen began the practice of fermenting milk in animal stomachs to preserve it, inadvertently creating yogurt. Throughout history, yogurt has been valued for its health benefits, especially for digestion and immunity.

Region:

While its exact origin is unknown, yogurt is a significant part of the diet in many cultures, including those in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Balkans. Today, it's consumed worldwide, with each region having its unique variations.

Ancient Uses:

- Digestive Health: Ancient Indian Ayurvedic scripts highlight yogurt for its digestive properties and its ability to balance gut flora.
- Immunity Booster: Historical practices in many cultures used yogurt for its immune-enhancing properties, owing to its probiotics.
- Nutritional Supplement: Recognized for its rich content of calcium, protein, and B vitamins, yogurt has been a traditional remedy for malnutrition and weakness.

Modern research:

- Yogurt consumption in infants and children may help reduce infectious diarrhea, improve gut microbiota composition, and reduce atopic dermatitis.(739)
- Yogurt provides an excellent source of highly bioavailable protein, a great source of calcium, and a source of probiotics that feature a range of health benefits.(740)
- Yogurt consumption is nutritionally beneficial, particularly for the health of older adults due to its abundance of calcium, zinc, B vitamins, and probiotics.(741)

Side Effects:

Yogurt is generally safe for most people. However, those who are lactose intolerant or have a milk allergy should avoid it. Some may experience mild stomach upset, especially with high consumption.

Parts used:

Fermented milk

Dry yarrow flowers

Preparations:

Yogurt can be eaten plain or as a part of various dishes. It's commonly used in smoothies, dips, dressings, and as a cooking ingredient in curries and baked goods. Yogurt can also be strained to make Greek yogurt, which is thicker and creamier.

Dosage:

- Culinary: Incorporating one or two servings (approximately 1 cup) of yogurt into your daily diet can promote gut health and provide essential nutrients.
- Medicinal: For specific health concerns, consult with a healthcare provider for appropriate types and amounts. Probiotic-rich yogurt is often recommended for digestive health.

Synergies:

★★★★★

Yogurt and Fruits

Combining fruit (eg. banana) and yogurt may provide synergistic health benefits through their probiotic and prebiotic properties, promoting digestive health and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.(742)

Choose yogurts with live active cultures for maximum gut health benefits.

Yucca spp.

Yucca

Yucca is a family of perennial shrubs and trees, characterized by their tough, sword-shaped leaves and clusters of white or whitish flowers. Some species can reach heights of up to 9 meters.

Joint Pain Relief and Skin Health Enhancer

Known for its resilient growth and distinctive appearance, yucca has also been used for centuries in traditional medicine and as a source of food by Native American cultures. Its roots, in particular, are noted for their potential health benefits, including anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Region:

Yucca is native to arid regions of the Americas, including the southwestern United States, Mexico, and South America.

Ancient Uses:

- Native American tribes used yucca for a variety of purposes. Medicinally, it was used to treat conditions such as arthritis, hair loss, and skin problems. The roots were used to make soap, while the leaves were used for weaving, and the flowers and fruits were used as food sources.
- The saponins found in yucca plants have been used traditionally as a natural soap and shampoo. Native Americans would crush the roots of yucca and use the lather to clean their hair and skin.
- Yucca root has been used traditionally as a natural remedy for joint pain and arthritis. It was believed to possess anti-inflammatory properties and was often consumed as a tea or applied topically as a poultice.

Modern research:

- Yucca has anti-arthritic and anti-inflammatory effects due to its rich source of saponins and polyphenolics, which may suppress intestinal protozoa and reduce joint inflammation.(570)
- Yucca has a wide range of therapeutic properties, including antioxidant, anti-inflammation, antiarthritic, anticancer, antidiabetic, antimicrobial, and hypocholesterolemic benefits. (571)

Parts used:

The roots and leaves of the Yucca plant are used for medicinal purposes.

Yucca leaves

Preparations:

Yucca can be prepared as a tea or decoction using the roots or leaves. It's also often dried and powdered for use in capsules or tablets and in tincture or extract form. A common dose is 1-2 grams of dried root daily.

Side Effects:

While generally safe for short-term use, it may cause stomach upset in some. Not advised during pregnancy.

Synergies:

★★★★

Yucca and Quillaja saponaria

A blend of partially purified Yucca and quillaja saponaria extracts in a ratio of 6:4 effectively lowers cholesterol levels in the blood and improves gastrointestinal symptoms in patients with high cholesterol.(572)

Activated Charcoal

Description: Activated Charcoal, not to be confused with the charcoal used in grilling, is a fine black powder made from bone char, coconut shells, peat, petroleum coke, coal, olive pits, or sawdust. The charcoal is activated by processing it at very high temperatures, which changes its internal structure, reducing the size of its pores and increasing its surface area. This results in a substance that is highly adsorbent, meaning it can bind to toxins and odors.

Activated charcoal

Medicinal Uses: Activated charcoal has a long history of medicinal use. It's known for its ability to trap chemicals and prevent their absorption in the body. This makes it particularly effective in treating certain types of poisoning and drug overdoses, under medical supervision. It's also used to alleviate gas and bloating, lower cholesterol levels, and even prevent hangovers. However, it's important to note that activated charcoal should not be used for alcohol, acid, or petroleum product poisonings.

Modern Research: Research has shown that activated charcoal can interact with certain medications, reducing their effectiveness. It's also being studied for its potential in kidney health by removing waste and toxins. Activated charcoal seems to work well in synergy with other detoxifying agents, but it's essential to consult with a healthcare provider before combining it with other treatments or supplements.

How to Use:

For digestive issues: Mix 1 teaspoon of activated charcoal in a glass of water and drink to alleviate gas and bloating. Do not consume more than three times a day.

For topical use: Create a paste by mixing activated charcoal powder with water and apply it to insect bites or minor skin infections. Rinse off after it dries to help soothe the skin and reduce itching or discomfort.

Artemisia afra

African Wormwood

Antimalarial and Respiratory Relief

Description: African Wormwood is a striking perennial shrub, native to Africa. It grows tall, reaching 2-4 meters, with silvery-grey leaves and bright yellow flowers. Found from South Africa to Kenya and westward to Senegal and Cameroon, it's usually harvested in late summer to early autumn.

African wormwood

Medicinal Uses: African Wormwood has been a cornerstone in traditional African medicine. Its leaves are renowned for treating malaria, thanks to the compound artemisinin. It's also been used for respiratory issues like coughs, colds, and chest infections, often through steam inhalation for immediate relief. Additionally, it has a history of treating parasitic worm infections and easing menstrual pain and irregularities.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies, including a 2021 report, highlight its role as a significant source of antimalarial medications, potentially even as a preventative measure. A 2012 Korean study also noted its antioxidant properties and potential in inhibiting cancer cell growth. African Wormwood may synergize well with other antioxidant-rich herbs for enhanced health benefits.

How to Use:

Brew tea using 1-2 teaspoons of dried leaves per cup for respiratory relief or menstrual discomfort. For a concentrated dose, take 1-2 milliliters of tincture 1-3 times daily for digestive or antimalarial benefits.

Quassia amara

Amargo, Bitter-wood

Relieves Digestive Issues and Supports Blood Health

Description: Quassia amara, known as amargo or bitter-wood, is a small tree found in Central and South America's tropical regions. It has a notably

bitter taste and was first introduced to Europeans by Graman Quassi, a healer and botanist. The tree's slow growth and modest size make it distinctive in its native habitat.

Amargo

Medicinal Uses: Bitter-wood bark has a long history of use for treating fever, digestive issues, scalp conditions, and malaria. The plant contains active ingredients like quassin and neoquassin, believed to be responsible for its healing properties. It's also recognized for its anti-inflammatory, antifungal, and antioxidant benefits.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research indicates that quassia extract can increase red blood cell count, suggesting anti-anemic effects. It might also be beneficial for diabetes and dyslipidemia management. A notable synergy is its combination with other anti-inflammatory herbs, enhancing its effectiveness in treating digestive complaints.

How to Use:

Brew a handful of dried bark in a tea to aid digestion or reduce fever.

For scalp treatment, apply a diluted extract directly to the affected area.

Andrographis paniculata

Andrographis

Cold and Flu Relief, Antioxidant Support

Description: Andrographis, a plant with lance-shaped leaves, white flowers, and dark purple fruits, stands about 30-110 cm tall. This "King of Bitters," as it's known for its extreme bitterness, is native to South Asia and Southeast Asia, thriving in countries like India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Pakistan.

Medicinal Uses: Traditionally, Andrographis was a go-to remedy for malaria, fever, snake bites, and various digestive issues. It was also valued for treating respiratory infections like colds, flu, and bronchitis. Its main component, andrographolide, is noted for its anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting properties.

Modern Research & Synergies: Studies show Andrographis has strong antioxidant properties, potentially surpassing Vitamin E. Its extract may also offer stress-relief and anxiolytic effects, similar to benzodiazepines. When paired with other immune-boosting herbs, it can enhance their effectiveness.

Andrographis

How to Use:

Brew a tea with 1 teaspoon of dried leaves per cup, once or twice daily for colds or digestive comfort. Alternatively, take 20-60 drops of tincture 1-3 times daily for immune support.

Bixa Orellana Linn

Annatto

Antioxidant and Antimicrobial Support

Description: Annatto, derived from the seeds of the achiote tree, is native to the tropical Americas. Traditionally used by Native Americans, its striking orange-red color makes it a favorite for coloring foods like cheese and sausages. Beyond its culinary uses, annatto is valued for its medicinal qualities.

Annatto

Medicinal Uses: Annatto is revered for its health benefits. The seeds and leaves are known for their antifungal and antibacterial properties. It's commonly used to aid in managing diabetes, diarrhea, and fever. Additionally, it's believed to help with heartburn, fluid retention, and even more serious conditions like malaria and hepatitis. Its antioxidant properties are also noted for cell protection. While it can be applied topically, it's important to note that it might cause skin irritation for some people.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent research highlights annatto's potential in protecting human cells from damage. Studies have found that annatto carotenoids can shield human erythrocytes (red blood cells) from oxidative harm. Another intriguing discovery is that annatto tocotrienol, a compound in annatto, may play a role in preventing osteoarthritis. This is evidenced by a significant decrease in osteocalcin levels and osteoclast surface in bones, as observed in animal studies. A synergy to consider is combining annatto with other antioxidants to enhance its cell-protective qualities.

How to Use:

Brew a handful of annatto leaves in hot water to create a soothing tea.

Incorporate 1 tablespoon of ground annatto seeds into your salad or soup for a health boost and a splash of color.

Terminalia arjuna

Arjun

Cardiac Wellness and Wound Healing

Description: The Arjun Tree, a tall evergreen native to India, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, is easily recognized by its smooth, grey bark and drooping branches. You'll often find it along riverbanks, where it stands out with its vibrant oval leaves and yellow flowers. This tree isn't just a staple in the landscape; it's a treasure trove of medicinal benefits.

Medicinal Uses: For centuries, the Arjun Tree has been a cornerstone in Ayurvedic medicine, particularly for heart health. Its bark is packed with heart-friendly compounds like flavonoids and glycosides, making it a go-to remedy for heart palpitations, hypertension, and high cholesterol. It's also been traditionally used for wound healing, thanks to its antibacterial and astringent properties, and as a gastric aid for issues like stomach ulcers and digestive disorders.

Arjun tree

Modern Research & Synergies: Research backs up the Arjun Tree's heart-boosting claims. A 2016 study showed that its bark extract could protect against caffeine-induced coronary heart disease. Its liver-supporting properties, particularly against drug-induced damage, have also been highlighted in studies. Pairing Arjun with other heart-healthy herbs or antioxidants could enhance its cardioprotective effects.

How to Use: Brew a heart tonic by boiling a small piece of Arjun bark in water for 10 minutes. For digestive relief, mix a teaspoon of powdered bark into a glass of water or your favorite drink once daily.

Euphorbia hirta

Asthma Plant

Alleviates Respiratory Issues and Supports Lung Health

Description: The Asthma Plant, commonly known as Dove Milk, is an annual weed thriving in tropical climates. Recognizable by its oval leaves, hairy stems, and small yellow flowers, it's notable for releasing a milky sap upon damage to its leaves or stems.

Medicinal Uses: Traditionally used in Indian medicine, the Asthma Plant offers several health benefits. Its leaves are brewed into tea to improve lung function, reduce inflammation, and alleviate bronchial spasms. This makes it a natural remedy for conditions like bronchial asthma, pneumonia, and other respiratory issues.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies have explored its potential in cancer treatment, finding it may inhibit the growth of leukemia, breast, and prostate cancer cells. Additionally, it's been studied for its antimicrobial, antimalarial, anti-asthmatic, antioxidant, and antiviral properties. Its role in managing viral diseases,

Asthma plant

including potential applications in COVID-19 treatment, is a subject of ongoing research. As a synergy, it may be combined with other respiratory-supporting herbs for enhanced benefits.

How to Use:

Brew a handful of dried leaves in hot water for a soothing tea.

Infuse 1 tablespoon of crushed leaves in boiling water, strain, and drink to aid respiratory health.

Adansonia digitata

Baobab

Antioxidant Powerhouse and Hunger Management

Region: The Baobab tree, iconic in the arid savannas of Africa, Madagascar, and Australia, stands out with its thick trunk and root-like branches. Often called the "Tree of Life," it's a symbol of resilience in dry landscapes.

Description & Uses: Baobab trees are not just impressive in size; they're nutritional powerhouses. The fruit, known as "monkey bread," is packed with vitamin C. The leaves, rich in calcium, and the seeds are valued for both nutrition and medicinal purposes. In ancient times, the tree's hollow trunks served as natural water reservoirs, vital during dry seasons.

Baobab fruit

Modern Research & Synergies: Research highlights the antioxidant properties of baobab seed oil, beneficial for skincare and food industries. The fruit, with its fiber and polyphenols, shows promise in aiding hunger management and weight control. Baobab's procyanidins and flavonol glycosides contribute to its strong antioxidant activities, making it a potential ally in health promotion. Synergistically, baobab can be paired with other antioxidants for enhanced benefits.

How to Use:

Powder: Mix 5-10 grams of baobab powder into smoothies or yogurt for a vitamin C boost.

Leaves: Cook fresh or dried leaves as a spinach alternative for a nutritious meal.

Berberis vulgaris

Barberry

Digestive Aid and Infection Fighter

Description: Barberry is a deciduous shrub found in Asia and Europe. It's recognized by its spiky branches, bright green leaves, and small yellow flowers that appear in spring. The plant produces small, red, antioxidant-rich berries. Traditional medicine has valued its roots and bark for centuries.

Medicinal Uses: Barberry has a history in Chinese and Persian medicine for treating digestive and liver issues, as well as skin diseases. In Europe, it was used against fevers and infectious diseases, including historically as a protective measure against the bubonic plague. The key component, berberine, offers antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral benefits, aiding in combating infectious diseases. It's also a strong anti-inflammatory, helpful for conditions like irritable bowel syndrome, eczema, and psoriasis**.**

Modern Research & Synergies: Modern research confirms barberry's anti-cancer, anti-cholesterol, liver protective, immune-boosting, and anti-inflammatory properties. These findings reinforce its traditional applications. As a synergy, barberry can be combined with milk thistle to enhance liver health, due to both having liver-protective properties.

Barberry

How to Use:

Brew a tea by steeping a handful of dried berries in hot water.

Add 1 tablespoon of crushed barberry bark to soups or stews for an herbal boost.

Remember, while barberry is generally safe, it's wise to consult with a healthcare professional before starting any new herbal remedy, especially

if you have existing health conditions or are taking other medications.

Peumus boldus

Boldo

Enhances Digestion and Supports Liver Health

Description: Boldo is a fragrant evergreen shrub originating from central and southern Chile and Peru. Its leaves emit a robust, woody aroma and have a mildly bitter flavor. The small, green boldo fruits are notable for their enjoyable taste, attributed to the ascaridole compound.

Medicinal Uses: Traditionally used in South American herbal medicine, boldo is valued for its effectiveness in managing digestive issues, reducing inflammation, combating infections and parasites, and supporting liver and gallbladder health. Additionally, boldo may aid in lowering cholesterol levels, enhancing digestive functions, and its antioxidant qualities could be beneficial in cancer prevention.

Boldo

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies highlight boldo's polyphenolic compounds as the key to its antioxidant capabilities. These compounds synergize to amplify the antioxidant effect, particularly beneficial for liver protection against oxidative stress and free iron. Adding boldo to a routine that includes other liver-supporting herbs like milk thistle may enhance overall liver health.

How to Use:

Brew a teaspoon of dried boldo leaves in hot water for 5-10 minutes to make a soothing tea. Drink once daily.

Incorporate a tablespoon of crushed boldo leaves into salads or soups for a healthful addition.

Borago officinalis

Borage

Respiratory Relief and Skin Health

Description: Borage is a friendly, easy-to-grow herb from the Mediterranean. Picture a plant about 3 feet tall, covered in little hairs, with bright blue, star-shaped flowers. Not only are these flowers pretty, but both the flowers and leaves are edible, tasting a bit like cucumber.

Medicinal Uses: Borage has a long history in traditional medicine. People have used it to ease coughs and bronchitis and to help with rheumatoid arthritis. It's also been a go-to for aiding digestion, acting as a diuretic, and treating skin issues like eczema and psoriasis. The big deal about borage, though, is its seed oil. This oil is packed with omega-6 fatty acids, especially gamma-linolenic acid (GLA). GLA is great for easing PMS symptoms and might even help keep your heart healthy by managing blood fats.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has found that borage oil is good for reducing liver damage and the harmful effects of radiation exposure. This is mainly because it boosts your body's natural defense against oxidative

Borage

stress. As for synergies, borage oil pairs well with fish oil supplements. Together, they can be more effective in reducing inflammation and promoting heart health.

How to Use:

Brew tea: Steep a handful of borage leaves in hot water for a soothing tea.

Salad enhancement: Add 1 tablespoon of fresh borage leaves to your salad for a unique cucumber flavor and health boost.

Bacopa monnieri

Brahmi

Enhances Memory and

Cognitive Health

Description: Brahmi, a versatile creeping perennial, thrives in diverse regions like India, Australia, Europe, Africa, and both Americas. It's known for its resilience and adaptability, making it a common sight in many natural landscapes.

Medicinal Uses: Bacopa monnieri, popular for boosting brain health, is traditionally used to enhance memory and focus. It's also known for its calming effects, helping to reduce stress and anxiety. The herb contains active components like bacosides, saponins, and alkaloids, which contribute to its health benefits.

Brahmi

Modern Research & Synergies: Studies have shown Brahmi's potential in supporting brain health, particularly in protecting against neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's. It's found to help reduce brain inflammation and improve dopamine levels, offering benefits for various conditions, including Alzheimer's and epilepsy. Brahmi may synergize well with omega-3 fatty acids, enhancing cognitive function and brain health.

How to Use:

For a simple brain boost, brew a teaspoon of dried Brahmi leaves in hot water for a rejuvenating tea. Alternatively, sprinkle half a teaspoon of Brahmi powder onto your morning cereal or smoothie.

Agathosma betulina

Buchu

Urinary Tract Health and Anti-inflammatory

Description: Buchu, a shrub native to South Africa's Western Cape, boasts star-shaped, white or pink-tinged flowers. Its oval, shiny green leaves are fragrant, with oil glands underneath and serrated edges. The plant also produces green fruit that darkens upon ripening.

Medicinal Uses: Buchu has a long history as a natural remedy. It's been used for bladder and kidney issues, indigestion, stomach problems, and even for wound cleaning. The Khoikhoi people of South Africa traditionally used it as a diuretic and stimulant, particularly for bloating. By the 19th century, it was recognized in British medicine for treating conditions like gout and urinary infections.

Modern Research & Synergies: While Buchu is still used in herbal diuretics and for urinary tract ailments, its effectiveness lacks extensive scientific validation. However, it has shown promising antidiabetic effects in certain studies. A noteworthy synergy is the combination of Buchu leaf oil with African wormwood, basil oil, and celery seed oil, which can be effective in treating diarrhea and related disorders.

How to Use: Brew an infusion by steeping 1 to 2 grams of Buchu leaves in boiling water, consuming 2 or 3 times daily. Alternatively, use 10 to 40 drops of Buchu tincture in water, taken similarly.

Buchu

Note: Buchu may cause stomach or kidney irritation and is not recommended during pregnancy or for those with kidney problems.

Bupleurum chinense

Bupleurum

Liver Health, Immune Support, Stress Relief

Description: Bupleurum, a tall perennial herb with slender green leaves and small yellow flowers, thrives in East Asia's wild fields and hillsides, especially in China, Japan, and Korea.

Medicinal Uses: Revered for over 2,000 years in Traditional Chinese Medicine, Bupleurum is famed for treating 'Shaoyang syndrome,' characterized by intermittent fever, chest fullness, irritability, and nausea. It's believed to balance body energies and 'lift' Yang Qi. In Japan's Kampo medicine, it's used for liver and digestive ailments, while in Korean medicine, it's known for its

anti-inflammatory effects and immune-boosting properties.

Modern Research & Synergies: Studies confirm Bupleurum's effectiveness in treating depression with minimal side effects. Its root, rich in saikosaponins, shows antioxidant activity. It synergizes well with other anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting herbs, enhancing their effects.

Bupleurum root

How to Use: Brew a decoction by boiling 5-12 grams of the dried roots daily. Alternatively, add 1-3 grams of powdered root to food or water.

Eschscholzia californica

California Poppy

Eases Anxiety, Insomnia, and Chronic Pain

Description: The California Poppy, a vibrant yellow and orange flower, is native to California and the western United States. Known for its beauty, it also serves as California's state flower. This plant can be either an annual or a perennial, adapting well to various environments in the region.

Medicinal Uses: California Poppy is a traditional remedy for pain relief, acting as a natural sedative. It's particularly effective for managing anxiety, stress, and insomnia. The plant contains alkaloids and other natural compounds that contribute to its soothing properties.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research indicates California Poppy's potential as an anti-inflammatory agent, which might be helpful in treating arthritis and chronic pain. While its calming, hypnotic effects are well-documented, more comprehensive clinical research is needed to fully understand its efficacy in pain management. A synergy to note: combining California Poppy with chamomile could enhance its sleep-inducing qualities.

How to Use:

Brew a teaspoon of dried California Poppy in hot water to create a relaxing tea. Drink before bedtime to aid sleep.

Incorporate a small amount (about half a teaspoon) of dried California Poppy into a warm bath for a soothing, stress-relieving experience.

California poppy

Ricinus communis

Castor Bean

Antioxidant and Antimicrobial Agent

Description: The Castor Bean, also known as the Castor Oil Plant, is a vibrant perennial shrub. It's easily recognized by its large, glossy, dark green leaves and eye-catching flowers in yellow and red hues. Originally from Ethiopia, this plant thrives in various regions of Africa and the Middle East.

Castor oil plant

Medicinal Uses: Despite containing toxic substances like ricin and ricinine, Castor Bean is valued in traditional medicine. Its oil and other parts offer anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and antifungal benefits. These properties make it helpful for skin issues, combating fungal and bacterial infections, easing respiratory problems, and assisting in detoxifying the body.

Modern Research & Synergies: Studies have revealed that the ethanol extract from Castor Bean seeds and leaves possesses potent antioxidant capabilities. This may underpin its medicinal uses, especially as an antioxidant supplement. Furthermore, the plant shows antibacterial effects,

notably against gram-negative bacteria such as Escherichia coli and Salmonella. A synergy worth noting is its use alongside other skin-soothing agents in topical applications for enhanced skin health.

How to Use:

For skin ailments: Apply a small amount of castor oil directly to the affected area.

As a detox aid: Mix 1-2 teaspoons of castor oil in a glass of warm water and drink on an empty stomach.

Vitex agnus-castus

Chasteberry

Women's Hormonal Balance and PMS Relief

Description: Chasteberry, a Mediterranean native, is a hardy shrub adorned with hand-shaped leaves and small, fragrant flowers. These flowers give way to reddish-black berries, each no larger than a peppercorn, and the plant is also found in Central Asia and the Southern United States.

Medicinal Uses: Historically, Chasteberry has been a key player in women's health. It's known for balancing female hormones, easing menstrual irregularities, and alleviating breast tenderness. Its use dates back to ancient Greece and Rome for reproductive health, and it was popular in medieval times for promoting chastity.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies confirm Chasteberry's benefits in reducing menopausal symptoms and its potential as a source of antidiabetic compounds. Its dopaminergic compounds have been effective in treating symptoms of premenstrual syndrome. Synergistically, it can be combined with other hormone-balancing herbs for enhanced effectiveness.

Chasteberry

How to Use: Brew a soothing tea with a handful of dried berries, or take 1-2 ml of Chasteberry tincture daily for hormonal balance.

Anthriscus cerefolium

Chervil

Supports Circulatory and Digestive Health

Description: Chervil, an annual herb from the Caucasus, is known for its mild anise-like flavor, resembling tarragon, parsley, and lemon. It has delicate, feathery leaves and is fragrant, similar to myrrh resin.

Medicinal Uses: Traditionally, chervil was a go-to herb for digestive problems, stomach and menstrual cramps, eczema, gout, kidney stones, pleurisy, and for boosting circulation and reducing inflammation. Presently, it's mainly valued for helping with hypertension (high blood pressure).

Modern Research & Synergies: Rich in vitamin C, carotene, calcium, iron, magnesium, and potassium, chervil is also a good source of bioflavonoids. Recent research highlights its chemical composition, including phenolic acids and flavonoids. It shows promise in fighting bacteria, yeasts, and in particular, glioblastoma cells. A synergy to note: Chervil's high potassium content can complement heart-healthy diets, potentially enhancing its benefits for hypertension.

How to Use:

Brew a teaspoon of dried chervil in hot water for a soothing tea. Alternatively, sprinkle a tablespoon of fresh chervil onto salads or soups for flavor and health benefits.

Chervil

Stellaria media

Chickweed

Supports Respiratory Health and Skin Healing

Description: Chickweed, a low-growing flowering plant, originates from Europe and has spread worldwide. This versatile plant, with edible leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds, thrives in various environments.

Medicinal Uses: Chickweed offers a range of health benefits. It's been traditionally used to treat skin infections, digestive issues, bronchitis, asthma, and indigestion. It's also known for aiding weight loss, thanks to its natural appetite suppressant, saponins, and lecithin, which helps in fat metabolism. Native Americans valued chickweed for treating respiratory problems, colds, coughs, flu, sore throats, and healing wounds.

Chickweed

Modern Research & Synergies: Research highlights chickweed's anti-inflammatory effects, particularly for skin health. Its antioxidant properties play a crucial role in these benefits. In wound healing, chickweed's polyphenol compounds have shown promising results. As for synergies, chickweed can be combined with other herbs like echinacea to enhance immune support, especially in cold and flu remedies.

How to Use: For a simple remedy, brew a handful of chickweed leaves in hot water for a soothing tea. Alternatively, add a tablespoon of fresh chickweed to salads for a nutritious boost.

Rheum palmatum

Chinese Rhubarb

Digestive Aid and Detoxification Support

Description: Chinese Rhubarb, also known as Da Huang, is a robust perennial herb found in the mountainous regions of western and northwestern China. It's recognized by its large, broad leaves and distinctive reddish-brown roots.

Medicinal Uses: Chinese Rhubarb has been a cornerstone in traditional Asian medicine. Known for its potent laxative properties, it's frequently used to relieve constipation and digestive discomfort. Beyond aiding digestion, it's believed to detoxify the body and purify the blood. In Korean and Mongolian medicine, it's valued for its anti-inflammatory effects, aiding in conditions like fever and skin disorders, and supporting liver and gallbladder health.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has uncovered that Chinese Rhubarb's leaf extracts possess strong antimicrobial properties, making it a promising ingredient in functional foods. It's also shown effectiveness in combination with standard medical treatments, enhancing patient recovery in various conditions. In terms of synergies, Chinese Rhubarb pairs well with other detoxifying herbs, amplifying its cleansing effects.

Chinese Rhubarb

How to Use:

To aid digestion, brew 1-2 grams of dried Chinese Rhubarb root in hot water to make a tea. Drink this up to three times a day. For topical use, apply a poultice made from powdered root directly to the skin.

Cinchona officinalis

Cinchona

Antimalarial, Aids Digestion, Reduces Fever

Description: Cinchona is an evergreen tree found in South America, especially in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Grown worldwide, it reaches 5 to 15 meters in height, with paired leaves, and produces pink, red,

Cinchona

or white flowers. The fruit is a small capsule containing numerous seeds.

Medicinal Uses: Historically, cinchona bark was a go-to for reducing fever and muscle pain. Its most famous use was in treating malaria, as it contains potent alkaloids like quinine. Besides its antimalarial properties, it's been used for digestive issues, hemorrhoids, ulcers, and even as an astringent in eye lotions.

Modern Research & Synergies: Modern studies reveal cinchona's potential in various areas, such as anti-obesity, anti-cancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-microbial treatments. Its alkaloids may also aid in treating blood disorders like β-thalassemia. Cinchona synergizes well with other anti-inflammatory and antioxidant herbs.

How to Use:

Brew a herbal tea by steeping 3-5 grams of cinchona bark in a cup of boiling water for up to 10 minutes. Sweeten with honey or sugar if desired. For malaria treatment, adults and children over 16 can take 648 mg of quinine (about 2 capsules) every 8 hours for a week.

Note: Use cinchona cautiously, as incorrect dosing may lead to side effects like blurred vision, dizziness, and headaches.

Codonopsis pilosula

Codonopsis, Dang Shen

Energy and Immune System Boost

Description: Dang Shen, or Codonopsis pilosula, is a perennial herb with bell-shaped flowers and oval leaves, thriving in East Asia's high-altitude regions like Sichuan and Shanxi in China. Its most notable feature is its large, tuberous roots, which are the main ingredient in medicinal preparations.

Codonopsis

Medicinal Uses: Known as the "poor man's ginseng," Dang Shen is valued for boosting energy, improving digestion, and enhancing respiratory health. It's a gentle tonic, traditionally used in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese medicine for strengthening the body, aiding recovery from illness, and boosting immunity.

Modern Research & Synergies: Studies show that Codonopsis pilosula's polysaccharides may protect brain cells, offering early treatment potential for Alzheimer's disease. Its leaves, rich in antioxidants and nutrients, are effective in tea form. This herb works well in combination with other antioxidants and brain health-supporting herbs.

How to Use:

Brew tea with 1-2 teaspoons of dried root for a nourishing drink, or incorporate the powdered form into daily meals, like soups, for a healthful boost.

Coleus forskohlii

Coleus

Enhances Cardiovascular and Respiratory Health

Description: Coleus forskohlii, often just called Coleus, is a bright, leafy plant that grows about two feet tall. Native to subtropical areas in India, Thailand, and Uganda, it's known for its colorful, mottled leaves and tuberous roots, which are rich in the beneficial compound forskolin.

Medicinal Uses: In traditional Ayurvedic medicine, Coleus has been used to support respiratory health, particularly for conditions like asthma and bronchitis. It's also been used in Thai medicine as a digestive aid, helping with indigestion and flatulence. In Brazil, Coleus was valued for its cardiovascular benefits, believed to help with blood circulation and blood pressure regulation.

Coleus

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has shown Coleus extracts to be effective against various pathogenic bacteria, supporting its use as a broad-spectrum antibacterial treatment. A study on overweight individuals suggested Coleus, combined with a diet, may aid in managing metabolic risks associated with obesity. Its antioxidant and antimicrobial properties also align with traditional uses in treating infections. Coleus can synergize with other herbs that support cardiovascular and respiratory health.

How to Use:

To incorporate Coleus into your routine, you can take it as a supplement in capsule or tablet form, containing a specified amount of forskolin. Typically, these supplements contain 100-250 mg of Coleus forskohlii extract (standardized to 10-20% forskolin), recommended twice daily. Alternatively, brew a tea from the dried root, but be aware it has a strong taste.

Anemone hepatica syn. Hepatica nobilis

Common Hepatica, Liverwort

Anti-inflammatory and Liver Support

Description: Common Hepatica, also known as Liverwort, is a herbaceous perennial wildflower. Its name comes from its distinctive three-lobed leaves, thought to resemble a liver. This plant thrives in woodland settings, particularly near streams or in moist, well-drained soils.

Medicinal Uses: Common Hepatica is valued in herbal medicine for its leaves, stems, and roots. It's known for its anti-inflammatory properties, offering relief for conditions like rheumatism, gout, and arthritis. Beyond easing joint pain, it's also helpful for digestive issues, including indigestion and stomach cramps, thanks to its soothing qualities.

Common hepatica

Modern Research & Synergies: Research highlights Common Hepatica's antioxidant and hepatoprotective abilities, suggesting its potential in liver health support. The plant's benefits stem from its rich composition of mucilage, tannins, and flavonoids, contributing to its antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antispasmodic effects. As a synergy, combining Common Hepatica with turmeric may enhance its anti-inflammatory effectiveness, especially for joint and digestive health.

How to Use:

For joint and digestive relief: Brew a teaspoon of dried leaves in a cup of hot water for tea. Drink once or twice daily.

For a soothing topical application, crush fresh leaves and apply directly to affected areas for relief from inflammation.

Centaurea cyanus

Cornflower

Soothes Digestive and Respiratory Ailments, Enhances Eye Health

Description: Cornflower, known for its striking deep blue flowers and papery texture, is native to Europe. Typically reaching 30-80 cm in height, it features a branching stem and lanceolate leaves up to 5 cm long.

Medicinal Uses: Traditionally, cornflower has been valued for its health benefits since ancient times. In Greece, it symbolized good luck and happiness, while in Egypt, it was used to treat eye diseases and improve vision. During the Middle Ages, it served as a remedy for digestive and respiratory ailments, and was also applied to wounds and skin infections.

Cornflower

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies have identified active compounds in cornflower, including flavonoids, alkaloids, and essential oils. These contribute to its anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, and pain-relieving properties. While primarily recognized for its benefits in eye health, cornflower can also be effective in supporting digestive and respiratory health. A notable synergy is with chamomile, enhancing its soothing effects, especially in eye care.

How to Use:

Eye Care: Steep 1-2 teaspoons of dried flowers in hot water for 10 minutes. Strain and use as a gentle eye rinse.

Digestive Aid: Brew a handful of leaves in a cup of tea to help soothe digestive discomfort.

Corydalis yanhusuo

Corydalis

Pain Relief and Circulatory Support

Description: Corydalis yanhusuo, growing up to 60 cm tall, is a delicate plant with fern-like leaves and small tubular flowers in pink, purple, or white. Native to China, it adapts well to mild climates globally.

Medicinal Uses: For centuries, Corydalis has been used in traditional Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian medicine. It's known for easing menstrual and abdominal pain, aiding digestion, and improving blood circulation. It has also been valued for treating emotional disturbances, mild mental disorders, and even as a mild sedative and tranquilizer.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has validated Corydalis as an effective analgesic, particularly for myocardial ischemia. Its synergy with turmeric, especially in a 3:2 ratio, shows a strong anticancer effect. Vinegar processing enhances its benefits, notably in reducing muscle tremors and liver damage.

Corydalis

How to Use:

Brew tea with a teaspoon of dried Corydalis roots steeped in hot water for 10 minutes. Alternatively, use the vinegar-soaked and cooked rhizome in small amounts in cooking.

Note: Avoid using Corydalis during pregnancy or breastfeeding. Side effects can include fatigue, nausea, and vertigo. Excessive use of certain compounds in Corydalis, like THP, can cause liver issues.

Turnera diffusa

Damiana

Aphrodisiac and Mood Enhancer

Description: Damiana, a small shrub with aromatic serrated leaves and bright yellow flowers, thrives in the hot, humid climates of Central America, the Caribbean, and parts of Texas. Native to Mexico, this plant is not only visually appealing but also culturally significant, with its roots in ancient Mexican traditions.

Medicinal Uses: Historically, Damiana was celebrated as a sexual tonic among indigenous Mexican tribes, enhancing sexual health and fertility. Beyond its aphrodisiac qualities, it was also used for various health concerns like dizziness, asthma, diabetes, and menstrual issues. With essential oils, tannins, apigenin, and arbutin, Damiana has been recognized for its potential to support liver health.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research highlights Damiana's antioxidant properties, beneficial in diabetes management and weight control. Studies show a synergistic effect when combined with Brazilian ginseng, enhancing sexual function, and when paired with yerba mate and guarana, it may aid in appetite control and energy boost.

Damiana

How to Use:

Brew a relaxing tea with 2-4 grams of dried Damiana leaves, or add a tablespoon to a herbal smoking blend for a unique flavor.

Note: While generally safe in food amounts, high doses can

have adverse effects. Always consume in moderation.

Salvia miltiorrhiza

Dan Shen, Chinese Sage

Promotes Cardiovascular Health and Blood Circulation

Description: Dan Shen, also known as Chinese Sage, is a perennial plant from the mint family. It is notable for its beautiful purple flowers and typically grows up to 60 cm tall. This herb thrives in China and Japan, favoring sunny spots and well-drained soils.

Dan Shen roots

Medicinal Uses: Dan Shen has been a cornerstone in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), especially for cardiovascular health. It's praised for improving blood circulation, easing chest pain, and supporting heart health. Additionally, it's used for menstrual issues like irregular periods and pain, as well as for inflammatory conditions such as arthritis.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has revealed Dan Shen's potential in treating conditions like colitis and reducing colorectal cancer risks associated with inflammation. It's also being explored as an antioxidant therapy for chronic vascular complications in diabetes. Its synergistic effect is notable when combined with other heart-supportive herbs, enhancing cardiovascular health and circulation.

How to Use:

Tea: Steep 3-15 grams of dried Dan Shen root in boiling water. Drink to support heart health.

Tincture: Take 2-4 milliliters of Dan Shen tincture three times a day, diluted in water or juice, for circulatory benefits.

Diatomaceous Earth

Description: Diatomaceous Earth, often abbreviated as DE, is a fine, powdery substance derived from the fossilized remains of diatoms – a type of hard-shelled algae. It's a naturally occurring material that has a range of uses from filtration to pest control. This pale, chalk-like powder is known for its porous and abrasive nature and is commonly found in both food-grade and industrial forms.

Medicinal Uses: Diatomaceous Earth is touted for its potential health benefits, especially in its food-grade form. It is believed to support digestion and promote detoxification. Some people use it for improving skin and hair health due to its high silica content. Additionally, it's sometimes used as a natural dewormer in animals. However, it's crucial to note that while DE is considered safe for consumption in small quantities, it should always be food-grade.

Modern Research: Research on Diatomaceous Earth's health benefits is limited but growing. Studies have looked into its role in cholesterol management and detoxifying effects. However, the findings are preliminary, and more research is needed to fully understand its health implications. DE is often used in conjunction with other detoxifying agents, like activated charcoal, for enhanced effects.

Diatomaceous Earth

How to Use:

As a Dietary Supplement: Mix a teaspoon of food-grade Diatomaceous Earth into water, juice, or a smoothie once daily. It's vital to stay well-hydrated when consuming DE.

For Skin Care: Mix a small amount of food-grade Diatomaceous Earth with water to form a paste and apply it as a facial mask. Let it dry for a few minutes before rinsing off. This can help exfoliate and improve skin texture.

Anethum graveolens

Dill

Soothes Digestion, Enhances Liver Health, and Aids Sleep

Description: Dill, a fragrant herb with a rich history in cooking and healing, originates from the Mediterranean and parts of Asia but is now globally

cultivated. Its strong aroma is hinted at in its Greek name origins, ‘aneeson’ or ‘aneeton’, meaning “strong-smelling”. The name ‘dill’ comes from the Norse word ‘dilla’, meaning “to soothe”.

Dill

Medicinal Uses: Dill offers numerous health benefits, including antiseptic, antispasmodic, and anti-inflammatory properties. In traditional Ayurvedic practices, it’s used to ease abdominal pain, relieve colic, and enhance digestion. Additionally, dill is effective in reducing nausea, boosting appetite, and promoting better sleep.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent research, like a 2021 study, highlights dill’s potential in protecting the liver. The study focused on its effectiveness against amoebic liver abscesses caused by Entamoeba histolytica, a harmful parasite. Regular consumption of dill extract showed promising results in reducing infection risks. As for synergies, dill pairs well with chamomile in teas, enhancing both their digestive and calming effects.

How to Use: To harness the benefits of dill, try these simple methods:

Brew a handful of dill leaves in hot water to make a soothing tea, ideal for digestion.

Sprinkle about 1 tablespoon of chopped dill over salads or soups to enhance flavor and health benefits.

Dysphania ambrosioides

Epazote

Aids Digestion and Respiratory Health

Description: Epazote, or Mexican tea, is an herb from Mexico and Central America. It usually grows up to 1.5 meters tall. This plant features dark green, jagged leaves and small white flowers. It’s known for its strong smell. Epazote has a long history, with the Mayans and Aztecs using it for its healing abilities.

Medicinal Uses: Epazote is traditionally used in Mexican remedies to help with digestive issues like gas, indigestion, and stomach cramps. It’s also believed to aid in respiratory problems, including asthma and bronchitis. Additionally, it’s used for treating skin conditions, wounds, and infections.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent research highlights that epazote’s essential oil is packed with benefits – it’s a powerful antioxidant, fights microbes, and reduces inflammation. These findings support some traditional uses and point towards the potential for new medicinal discoveries from epazote. It’s also noted for its abilities to fight cancer cells, microbes, and diabetes. A synergy to consider: combining epazote with other anti-inflammatory herbs may enhance its effectiveness, particularly for digestive and respiratory conditions.

How to Use:

Brew a handful of epazote leaves in hot water to make a soothing tea, especially helpful for digestion.

Add 1 tablespoon of dried epazote leaves to salads or soups to enjoy its benefits and unique flavor.

Epazote

Epsom Salts

Description: Epsom salts, known scientifically as magnesium sulfate, are more than just a household name. Despite the name, they aren’t edible salts, but rather a naturally occurring mineral compound. These white, crystalline salts are famous for their use in baths and beauty routines. Epsom salts have been a staple in home remedies for centuries, celebrated for their simplicity and versatility.

Home Uses: Epsom salts are widely used for relaxation and beauty treatments. They're a popular bath additive, believed to soothe muscle aches and relieve stress. In gardening, Epsom salts are used as a fertilizer, thanks to their high magnesium content which is vital for plant growth.

Epsom salt

Medicinal Uses: The therapeutic uses of Epsom salts are diverse. They are primarily known for relieving muscle soreness, reducing swelling, and alleviating pain. In addition, they can act as a mild laxative when dissolved in water and consumed. Their skin-soothing properties make them a common choice for treating minor skin irritations and sunburns.

Modern Research: Scientific research supports some of the traditional uses of Epsom salts. Studies suggest that magnesium and sulfate are absorbed through the skin, which may explain the relief from muscle soreness and improved skin health. However, the extent and effectiveness of this absorption are still under investigation. When used in conjunction with other minerals or essential oils, Epsom salts can enhance relaxation and skin health benefits.

How to Use:

Bath Soak: Dissolve 2 cups of Epsom salts in a warm bath and soak for at least 12 minutes. This can help ease muscle pain and promote relaxation.

Foot Soak: Mix 1/2 cup of Epsom salts in a basin of warm water. Soak feet for about 20 minutes to alleviate foot aches and soften rough skin.

Polygonum multiflorum

Fo Ti, He Shou Wu

Rejuvenating Tonic and Hair Health

Description: Fo Ti, also known as He Shou Wu, is a vine-like plant with heart-shaped leaves, small greenish-white flowers, and reddish-black fruits. Native to central and southern China, it's also found in Taiwan and Japan.

Medicinal Uses: This herb is celebrated in traditional Chinese medicine for promoting healthy aging and vitality. It's linked to the story of Mr. He Shou Wu, who supposedly regained his youth and dark hair color by using Fo Ti. It's also used for hair health, enhancing hair growth by nourishing the blood and strengthening the liver and kidneys. Additionally, Fo Ti supports reproductive health and fertility by tonifying the kidneys and nourishing the blood.

Fo Ti root

Modern Research & Synergies: A 2018 study highlighted Fo Ti's potential in immunomodulation and immunostimulation. Its roots, containing anthraquinone derivatives, have shown promise in reducing inflammation, especially in liver cells. Fo Ti may synergize well with other anti-inflammatory herbs, enhancing its potential for treating natural inflammatory diseases.

How to Use:

Tea: Boil 9-15 grams of dried Fo Ti root for a daily tonic.

Capsules: Consume 1-2 capsules 2-3 times daily as a dietary supplement.

Fo Ti is renowned for its rejuvenating properties, with its roots being the key part used in various preparations. Its adaptability in different forms, like tea and capsules, makes it a versatile herb in daily wellness routines.

Digitalis purpurea

Foxglove

Heart and Circulatory Health, Potential in Cancer Prevention

Description: Foxglove is known for its striking, trumpet-like flowers in pink, purple, and white. It's a plant with a rich history in herbal medicine, often found in woodlands and gardens.

Medicinal Uses: Foxglove has been a part of medicine since the 16th century, primarily for heart and circulatory issues. By the 18th century, it became a go-to treatment for heart conditions and dropsy, now known as congestive heart failure. Its key

ingredients, cardiac glycosides, are highly effective in heart treatments but must be used with caution due to their potency.

Foxglove

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies have shown Foxglove's potential beyond heart care. A 2014 study found that its extract could protect the liver from certain toxins. Further, a 2017 Swedish study indicated that long-term use of digitalis, the active compound in Foxglove, might lower the risk of certain gastrointestinal cancers, like liver cancer. While more research is needed, these findings highlight its diverse potential.

How to Use:

Brew a small handful of dried Foxglove leaves in hot water for a heart-supporting tea.

For a mild liver tonic, soak a teaspoon of dried leaves in cold water overnight and drink in the morning.

Note: Due to its powerful effects, precise dosing and medical supervision are crucial when using Foxglove.

Fumaria officinalis

Fumitory

Liver Health and Digestive Support

Description: Fumitory, commonly known as earth smoke, is found in Europe and Asia. This small, annual plant, often seen as an invasive weed, stands about 50 cm tall. It features reddish stems, green leaves, and petite pink or white flowers. Historically, it was favored by the Greeks and Romans for its believed health benefits, including blood purification.

Medicinal Uses: Fumitory is rich in alkaloids and flavonoids, which contribute to its medicinal value. It's mainly used for liver and digestive issues, including constipation, thanks to its mild laxative properties. Additionally,

Fumitory

it helps with skin infections, respiratory problems, and is beneficial for those suffering from rheumatism and arthritis. Its ability to stimulate bile flow aids in maintaining a healthy liver.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies confirm fumitory's effectiveness in liver and digestive health. Its compounds synergize well with milk thistle, enhancing liver support. However, details on exact interactions remain under research.

How to Use:

Brew a teaspoon of dried fumitory in hot water for a soothing tea.

Mix a small amount of powdered fumitory into juices or smoothies.

Glechoma hederacea

Ground Ivy

Respiratory and Digestive Aid

Description: Ground Ivy, a member of the mint family, is an evergreen perennial plant recognized by its round, toothed leaves and charming bluish-purple, bell-shaped flowers. Thriving in moist, shady areas, it's often seen in gardens and fields. However, despite its widespread presence, many consider it a weed.

Medicinal Uses: Ground Ivy has been a staple in herbal medicine for centuries, primarily for respiratory ailments, digestive problems, and skin conditions. Historically, it was a revered panacea in medieval Europe, used for everything from healing wounds to treating headaches and jaundice. This

versatile herb is rich in antimicrobial, antiviral, and antifungal properties, making it a popular choice for teas, tinctures, and extracts. These preparations are known to ease inflammation, combat oxidative stress, and fight infections. Ground Ivy also finds its way into the culinary world, adding a unique flavor to traditional beers and liqueurs.

Ground ivy

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent research highlights Ground Ivy's rich content of phenolic compounds, which are responsible for its strong antioxidant capabilities. Studies have confirmed that extracts from the dried herb are potent antioxidants and, importantly, are safe for both internal and external use, showing no harmful effects on human cells. As for synergies, Ground Ivy pairs well with other respiratory support herbs like Eucalyptus or Peppermint, enhancing their soothing effects on the respiratory system.

How to Use:

Brew a handful of Ground Ivy leaves in hot water for a soothing tea. This can be particularly helpful for respiratory discomfort.

For a skin-soothing application, mix 1 tablespoon of crushed Ground Ivy leaves into a mild lotion and apply to the affected area.

Commiphora wightii

Guggul

Aids in Cholesterol Management and Cardiovascular Health

Description: Guggul is a small, shrubby tree native to India and Pakistan, growing up to 4 meters tall. It has small, fragrant flowers and produces a notable resin, known as guggul gum.

Medicinal Uses: Historically, guggul has been a staple in ancient medicine for treating a range of ailments, including internal tumors, malignant sores, sinus problems, arthritis, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and ulcers. It's also been used to reduce cholesterol levels, particularly low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, and total cholesterol. Additionally, guggul has found use in treating skin conditions like acne and as a weight loss supplement, though scientific evidence for these uses is limited.

Guggul gum

Modern Research & Synergies: Modern studies have highlighted guggul's potential in preventing and managing diabetes and its related disorders, based on its effects on glucose and lipid metabolisms in diabetic rats. Research also indicates its effectiveness as an antioxidant, potentially useful in ischemic heart disease caused by oxidative stress. Guggul is being explored for its anti-inflammatory properties too. A synergy with other anti-inflammatory herbs could enhance its benefits in managing arthritis and related conditions.

How to Use:

Guggul is most commonly consumed in capsule form, with a typical adult dosage of 0.5-1 gram taken orally three times daily. For skin conditions, it can be applied as a cream or ointment.

Note: Guggul should be used cautiously. It can cause side effects like diarrhea, nausea, and skin rash in some individuals. It's not recommended for pregnant or breastfeeding women due to potential hormonal effects and should be used carefully alongside estrogen-containing medications like birth control pills.

Hyoscyamus niger

Henbane

Sedative and Antispasmodic Properties

Description: Henbane, a member of the nightshade family, grows in Europe and parts of Asia, often in rocky, uncultivated areas. This plant has a striking appearance with yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers and fuzzy leaves. It's easily recognized by its unique pepper-and-garlic scent. Though it's poisonous, containing substances like hyoscyamine and scopolamine, henbane has been used in medicine for centuries.

Medicinal Uses: Historically,

henbane has been valued for its ability to soothe and relax. It's been used for easing earaches, rheumatic pains, and toothaches, as well as for helping with sleep problems like insomnia. This herb also has a past in treating more severe conditions, such as mental disturbances, in ancient Rome. Despite its dark association with witchcraft in medieval times, its sedative and antispasmodic properties are undeniable.

Henbane

Modern Research & Synergies:

Recent studies have shed light on henbane's potential. In 2021, research showed that a combination of henbane extract and propolis could help improve symptoms in COVID-19 patients. Additionally, its seed extracts have shown strong antimicrobial effects against certain pathogens, highlighting its role in combating infections like urinary tract infections. Henbane may synergize well with other antimicrobial agents, enhancing their effectiveness against a range of bacteria and fungi.

How to Use:

For a calming tea, steep a small amount (about a teaspoon) of dried henbane leaves in hot water for 5-10 minutes. Alternatively, for topical use, mix a pinch of henbane powder into a soothing balm or lotion to apply on aching areas. Always use in moderation due to its potent nature.

[Note: Henbane is a toxic herb and should be used with extreme caution. Consult with a healthcare professional before use.]

Cyclopia spp.

Honeybush

Respiratory Relief and Digestive Aid

Description: Honeybush is a charming shrub, easily recognized by its bright yellow flowers that give off a honey-like scent. Originating in South Africa's Eastern and Western Cape provinces, this plant can reach up to 3 meters in height. It's a beautiful and useful addition to the local flora.

Medicinal Uses: Honeybush has long been a staple in traditional remedies, particularly for respiratory conditions like coughs, colds, and bronchitis. Its tea is known to soothe the throat and reduce inflammation. Additionally, it's been used for digestive issues such as indigestion and constipation, and for skin health, treating conditions like eczema and sunburns.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies have highlighted Honeybush's potential in combating oxidative stress and neurodegenerative disorders. Its extracts are rich in antioxidants and antimicrobial properties, making them promising for specific health applications. Moreover, its anti-wrinkle effects suggest its use in anti-aging skincare products. Honeybush may synergize well with other antioxidants and anti-inflammatory herbs.

How to Use:

For a soothing tea, steep 1-2 teaspoons of dried Honeybush in a cup of boiling water for about 10 minutes. It's caffeine-free and can be enjoyed either hot or cold. For a skin remedy, consider adding it to bathwater or applying as a poultice for its moisturizing and healing properties.

Honeybush

Equisetum arvense

Horsetail

Promotes Bone and Joint Health, Supports Kidney Function

Description: Horsetail, a plant you might find growing near rivers, marshes, or damp meadows, stands out with its hollow, green, jointed stems.

Sometimes, these stems can be brown or yellow. The leaves are not like typical leaves but are tiny scales.

Medicinal Uses: Horsetail has a long history in herbal medicine. It's been used as a diuretic to cleanse the kidneys and urinary tract. People have also used it for wound healing, stopping bleeding, and promoting healthy skin and hair growth. In traditional Chinese medicine, Horsetail serves as a tonic, supporting bone and connective tissue health, easing joint pain and stiffness, and even being used for lung conditions.

Modern Research & Synergies: Modern research highlights Horsetail's richness in silica, vital for healthy skin, hair, nails, and bones. It's effective in reducing inflammation and promoting tissue growth. Specifically, it shows promising results in treating rheumatoid arthritis. A synergy to consider is combining Horsetail with other joint-supporting herbs or supplements like glucosamine for enhanced joint health benefits.

Horsetail

How to Use:

Brew a tea by steeping a handful of Horsetail leaves in boiling water for 10 minutes. This tea supports hair and nail health.

For joint support, mix 1 tablespoon of Horsetail extract into a smoothie or juice daily.

Remember, these are simple ways to incorporate Horsetail into your daily routine for its health benefits.

Piscidia erythrina / Piscidia piscipula

Jamaica Dogwood

Alleviates Pain, Insomnia, and Anxiety

Description: Jamaica Dogwood, known scientifically as Piscidia piscipula, is typically found in the Caribbean, Central, and South America. This tree, often reaching heights of up to 50 feet, is notable for its broad, rounded canopy.

Medicinal Uses: Traditionally, Jamaica Dogwood has been utilized for its pain-relieving properties. The bark is known to help alleviate discomfort from conditions like arthritis and menstrual cramps. It's also been used to address insomnia, anxiety, and to ease muscle spasms.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies have backed the traditional uses of Jamaica Dogwood, particularly highlighting its anti-inflammatory and sedative qualities. It's important to note that while the bark's benefits are promising, the plant can be toxic. To ensure safe usage, it's recommended to consult a healthcare professional. As a synergy, combining Jamaica Dogwood with other anti-inflammatory herbs like turmeric may enhance its effectiveness, especially in managing arthritis pain.

Jamaica dogwood

How to Use:

Brew a tea by steeping a small piece of bark in boiling water for 10-15 minutes. This can help with pain relief and relaxation.

For external use, create a poultice from the bark to apply on sore areas, which may help reduce inflammation and pain.

Remember to use Jamaica Dogwood under professional guidance due to its potent nature.

Jasminum officinale

Jasmine

Calming and Antimicrobial Properties

Description: Jasmine,

commonly known as common jasmine, thrives as a climbing shrub in tropical and subtropical areas of Eurasia. Its distinctive feature is the fragrant white flowers, which are known for their sweet and intense aroma.

Medicinal Uses: Jasmine has been a staple in traditional Asian and Middle Eastern medicine. It's been used for a variety of purposes, including easing digestive issues and skin conditions. Its calming properties are well-regarded, particularly in soothing the mind and body. Traditional Chinese Medicine values jasmine tea for its benefits in managing anxiety, insomnia, respiratory problems, menstrual cramps, and other gynecological concerns.

Jasmine

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has validated jasmine's traditional uses by identifying ten bioactive compounds in its flowers. For instance, a 2021 study highlighted jasmine flower extract's effectiveness against bacteria like Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus, showcasing its antimicrobial properties. Similarly, jasmine oil has been recognized for its potential as a natural antimicrobial agent, particularly against oral pathogens. In terms of synergies, combining jasmine with other herbal remedies, like chamomile, can enhance its calming effects, especially for stress relief and sleep promotion.

How to Use:

Brew a tea: Steep a small handful of jasmine flowers in hot water for a soothing tea.

Aromatherapy: Use a few drops of jasmine oil in a diffuser for relaxation and sleep aid.

Chrysanthemum morifolium

Ju Hua, Florists' Chrysanthemum

Cools the Body and Supports Eye Health

Description: The Florists' Chrysanthemum is a striking perennial plant known for its vibrant blooms, with a central cluster of disc florets surrounded by long ray florets. Native to Asia and northeastern Europe, it's especially common in China, where it's not just a pretty addition to gardens but a respected medicinal herb.

Medicinal Uses: In traditional Chinese medicine, Ju Hua (Florists' Chrysanthemum) has long been used for its cooling and detoxifying effects. It's been praised for helping with fever, headaches, and sore throats. Beyond this, it's been a go-to herb for supporting eye health and improving vision. Ju Hua is also known for its calming properties, aiding in relaxation, stress reduction, and promoting better sleep.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has shown that Chrysanthemum morifolium is a promising natural antioxidant. Combining it with other antioxidants may boost its efficacy. Additionally, studies have explored its potential as an anti-infective agent and natural preservative, thanks to its essential oils. Pairing it with other calming herbs can enhance its relaxing effects.

Ju Hua

How to Use:

Brew a refreshing tea with 3-6 grams of dried Ju Hua flowers steeped in hot water for 10-15 minutes. Enjoy this calming beverage up to three times a day. Remember, if you're allergic to plants in the Asteraceae family, you might react to Chrysanthemum as well.

Viburnum tinus

Laurustinus

Soothes Respiratory Ailments and Eases Digestive Issues

Description: Laurustinus, an evergreen shrub, thrives in the Mediterranean region. It boasts glossy green leaves, bearing a resemblance to bay laurel.

Laurustinus

Throughout the year, it adorns itself with clusters of small, sometimes fragrant pink or white flowers. After rain, the flowers emit a more potent scent, which can be overwhelming for some.

Medicinal Uses: Historically, Laurustinus has been a go-to remedy for respiratory ailments. Boiling its leaves to create steam for inhalation offers relief for sore throats, coughs, and chest congestion. Applying crushed leaves directly onto the chest was a traditional method to ease congestion. Beyond respiratory uses, it's been tapped for treating fever, headaches, and colds. The leaves, when infused in water, were believed to alleviate stomach issues. Additionally, its berries have served as natural remedies for constipation, acting as a diuretic and laxative.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies highlight the leaves of Viburnum tinus as a treasure trove of phytochemicals, including polyphenols, triterpenoids, flavonoids, coumarins, and iridoids. These compounds give the plant anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties. While specific synergies with other herbs aren't widely documented, combining Laurustinus with other anti-inflammatory herbs like turmeric could enhance its soothing effects, especially for respiratory conditions.

How to Use:

To leverage its respiratory benefits, boil a handful of Laurustinus leaves in water and inhale the steam for relief from coughs and congestion. For a soothing herbal tea, steep 1 tablespoon of dried leaves in hot water for 10 minutes, then strain and enjoy. This tea can help with stomach ailments and general relaxation.

Leonotis leonurus

Leonotis, Lion's Ear

Respiratory and Digestive Aid

Description: Lion's Ear, a striking perennial shrub native to South Africa, can reach heights of 2-3 meters. It's easily recognized by its unique, whorled orange tubular flowers that resemble a lion's ear. Thriving in warm climates, it's also grown in the United States and other regions.

Lion's Ear

Medicinal Uses: Lion's Ear has a long history in South African traditional medicine. It's been used to treat fever, headaches, flu, chest infections, and even snakebites. Renowned for its calming effects, it's also been employed to manage hypertension. Historically, Lion's Ear was used for respiratory ailments like coughs, colds, and bronchitis, with its leaves and flowers brewed into tea or smoked for relief. Its anti-inflammatory properties were applied topically for skin issues like rashes and insect bites, and it served as a natural remedy for digestive disorders, easing symptoms like indigestion and bloating.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research supports Lion's Ear's traditional use, showing potential antihyperglycemic and antilipidemic effects. Its extracts are also being explored for antioxidant and anticancer properties. For a synergistic effect, Lion's Ear can be paired with other herbs that support respiratory health or enhance its calming effects.

How to Use:

Brew tea using 1-2 grams of dried Lion's Ear in a cup of boiling water. Steep, strain, and enjoy 1-3 times daily. Alternatively, apply a poultice of the herb directly to affected skin areas for relief.

Filipendula ulmaria

Meadowsweet

Natural Pain Relief and Digestive Aid

Description: Meadowsweet, with its delightful almond-like aroma, graces damp meadows and stream banks in Europe, Western Asia, and parts of North America. Recognizable by its frothy white flowers, it's a summer spectacle in natural settings.

Medicinal Uses:

Meadowsweet, known for its natural pain-relieving properties, has been a traditional remedy for headaches, menstrual cramps, and joint pain, thanks to its salicylate content. It also aids digestion and soothes stomach discomfort, indigestion, and acid reflux. Historically, it was used to reduce fevers and inflammation, benefiting conditions like arthritis and gout.

Meadowsweet

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has indicated Meadowsweet's potential in preventing colorectal cancer, supporting its traditional use in cancer treatment. Additionally, it's been identified as a powerful agent against neurocarcinogenesis. Its anti-inflammatory and cancer-preventing properties may synergize well with other herbs focused on digestive and immune health.

How to Use: Brew a tea by steeping a handful of Meadowsweet flowers and leaves in hot water. Drink once or twice daily for pain relief or digestive support. Alternatively, sprinkle dried Meadowsweet into salads for a subtle, sweet flavor.

Viscum album

Mistletoe

Reduces Inflammation and Supports Circulatory Health

Description: Mistletoe is an evergreen shrub often found in temperate regions worldwide. It's a parasitic plant with small, leathery leaves and white berries. Its waxy, sticky stems allow it to attach to trees like apple, hawthorn, and oak. Besides its biological features, mistletoe has been a part of various cultural and spiritual traditions.

Medicinal Uses: Mistletoe has been traditionally used for treating a range of conditions including epilepsy, asthma, hypertension, headaches, menopausal symptoms, dermatitis, arthritis, and rheumatism. It's known for its anti-inflammatory properties, ability to improve circulation, and potential to increase fertility.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research shows that Viscum album extract, used with conventional cancer treatments, has benefited a significant majority of cancer patients (85%) without severe side effects. The plant's extract contains carbohydrates, glycosides, flavonoids, saponins, triterpenes, and tannins, which might contribute to its anticonvulsant and sedative properties, supporting its traditional use in managing convulsions and insomnia. As a synergy, mistletoe extract could be combined with anti-inflammatory herbs to enhance its efficacy in reducing inflammation.

Mistletoe

How to Use:

Brew a handful of mistletoe leaves in boiling water for a soothing tea.

Add 1 tablespoon of finely chopped mistletoe leaves to salads or smoothies.

Morinda citrifoli

Noni

Immune Support and Pain Relief

Description: Noni, also known as Morinda citrifolia, is a fruit-bearing tree found in Southeast Asia and Australasia. The fruit, commonly called "cheese fruit" or "vomit fruit," is known for its distinctive and strong odor. It grows in tropical climates and has a unique appearance.

Noni

Medicinal Uses: Historically, Noni fruit was a staple in Polynesian medicine. It was used for healing skin wounds, easing digestive issues, and respiratory ailments. In Hawaiian traditions, Noni served as a pain reliever for wounds and a natural remedy for diabetes, high blood pressure, and appetite loss.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has shown that Noni contains bioactive substances beneficial for various health issues. These include enhancing the immune system and potentially supporting mental health, joint health, and reducing discomfort. A synergy to consider is combining Noni juice with other immune-boosting supplements for enhanced benefits.

How to Use:

Brew a handful of Noni leaves in hot water for a soothing tea.

Add a tablespoon of Noni juice to your morning smoothie for an immune boost.

Tabebuia impetiginosa

Pau d'Arco

Immune Booster and Antimicrobial

Description: Pau d'Arco, also known as Taheebo or Lapacho, is a majestic evergreen tree native to South America's Amazon rainforest and Argentina. It's easily recognized by its vibrant pink to violet flowers and remarkably hard, durable wood. The inner bark of this tree is where its medicinal magic lies.

Medicinal Uses: For centuries, indigenous South American cultures have turned to Pau d'Arco bark for a variety of health benefits. It's been a traditional remedy for infections, fever, digestive issues, and skin diseases. Known for its anti-inflammatory, antiviral, and antifungal properties, Pau d'Arco has also been a general tonic to boost immunity and promote overall wellbeing.

Pau d'Arco

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent research has been exploring Pau d'Arco's potential in treating immunological conditions, hinting at its anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory properties. Moreover, studies reveal that Pau d'Arco bark extracts can enhance the effectiveness of certain antibiotics against gastrointestinal pathogens. This suggests a synergy when combined with antibiotics, especially in treating gastrointestinal diseases.

How to Use:

Brew as a tea: Simmer a small handful of the chopped inner bark in water for 15-20 minutes. Drink 1 cup up to three times daily.

As a dietary supplement: Consume 1-2 grams of dried bark daily.

Remember, Pau d'Arco is generally safe when used correctly, but high doses or long-term use may cause side effects like nausea or dizziness.

Pelargonium sidoides

Pelargonium, Umckaloabo

Respiratory and Immune Support

Description: This herb, known as Pelargonium sidoides or South African Geranium, is a perennial with heart-shaped leaves and dark reddish-purple flowers. Native to South Africa, particularly the Lesotho area, it's a plant that's as beautiful as it is functional.

Medicinal Uses: South African Geranium has been traditionally cherished for its effectiveness in treating digestive issues like dysentery and diarrhea, as well as liver disorders. It's also famed for its respiratory benefits, particularly in easing coughs, bronchitis, and sinusitis. Moreover, it's known for its immune-boosting properties, helping to fortify the body's natural defenses.

Pelargonium root

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has revealed that proanthocyanidins in its root extract can be effective for treating infectious diseases. Its essential oils, particularly those extracted with methanol and petroleum spirit methods, show strong antibacterial effects, making them promising for use in food and cosmetic industries. A great synergy is seen when combined with other immune-supportive herbs, enhancing its effect in cold and flu remedies.

How to Use:

To harness its benefits, try taking 20-30 drops of Pelargonium tincture three times a day. Alternatively, brew a tea with a small amount of the root for respiratory relief.

Platycodon grandiflorus

Platycodon, Balloon Flower

Supports Respiratory Health and Combats Obesity

Description: The balloon flower, a perennial bloomer native to East Asia, thrives in the wild across China, Korea, and Japan. Renowned for its unique blue or purple bell-shaped flowers, they resemble balloons before they open fully. This eye-catching feature gives it its popular name.

Medicinal Uses: For centuries, balloon flower root has been a staple in traditional Chinese medicine. It's particularly favored for treating respiratory and digestive issues, as well as colds and flu. The root, rich in saponins, flavonoids, and polysaccharides, is dried for use in teas or decoctions. These compounds are known for their anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties. Additionally, the root is used as an expectorant to help clear phlegm.

Platycodon

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies have highlighted the potential of balloon flower root in supporting heart health, especially for those with hypertension. It's also been studied for its anti-obesity effects, showing promise in mitigating the impacts of high-fat diets and related metabolic disorders. Balloon flower extract might serve as a functional food or medicinal product for obesity prevention and management. Synergistically, it can complement dietary changes and exercise regimes for a holistic approach to health.

How to Use:

Brew a tablespoon of dried root in a cup of hot water for a soothing tea.

Incorporate a tablespoon of finely chopped fresh root into salads or soups for a health boost.

Zanthoxylum americanum

Prickly Ash, Toothache Tree

Dental Pain Relief and Digestive Aid

Description: The Prickly Ash, a deciduous shrub native to North America, grows up to 10 meters high. It features spiny, grey bark and pinnate leaves. This plant is commonly found in the central and eastern United States and parts of Canada.

Medicinal Uses: Prickly Ash has been a trusted remedy for toothache, hence its nickname, "Toothache Tree." Its bark and berries have been used in Native American medicine for circulatory issues, rheumatism, and skin conditions. In traditional Chinese medicine, a related species is used for digestive ailments.

Prickly Ash

Modern Research & Synergies: A 2021 study confirmed that Zanthoxylum species, including Prickly Ash, contain bioactive compounds beneficial for health. It's particularly noted for its antifungal properties. Prickly Ash could synergize well with other digestive aids or pain-relieving herbs, enhancing its efficacy in treating digestive issues and dental pain.

How to Use:

For toothache relief, chew on a small piece of Prickly Ash bark. To aid digestion, steep a

teaspoon of dried bark in hot water for a soothing tea.

Rehmannia glutinosa

Rehmannia, Di Huang

Kidney and Blood Tonic

Description: Rehmannia, a perennial plant with striking purplish-red flowers and ovate leaves, thrives in grassy fields and hillsides of China, Japan, and Korea. Its large, fleshy root is the key to its healing powers.

Medicinal Uses: For over a millennium, Rehmannia has been a cornerstone in traditional Chinese medicine, revered for rejuvenating vital energy (Qi), balancing yin and yang, and nourishing blood. It's commonly used to address anemia, dizziness, night sweats, menstrual irregularities, and as a kidney tonic to enhance overall health and longevity.

Rehmannia

Modern Research & Synergies: Modern studies echo ancient wisdom, highlighting Rehmannia's role in improving glucose metabolism, reducing insulin resistance, and offering antioxidant benefits. Synergistically, it pairs well with other blood-tonifying and kidney-supporting herbs in traditional formulas.

How to Use:

Brew a tea using 9-15 grams of prepared root (dried and cooked in wine or black bean broth) to support kidney function and blood health. Alternatively, add powdered Rehmannia to soups or porridges for a nourishing boost.

Geranium robertianum

Robert Geranium, Herb Robert

Wound Healing and Digestive Relief

Description: Herb Robert, scientifically known as Geranium robertianum, is an herbaceous plant that can be either annual or biennial. This low-growing creeper, which typically reaches up to 6 inches in height, is notable for its bright green, deeply divided leaves and charming, small pink flowers with five petals.

Medicinal Uses: Herb Robert is renowned for its healing capabilities, emanating a pleasant, lemony aroma. Historically, it has been used to treat a variety of ailments, including wounds, infections, digestive issues, and even to counteract poisons. Additionally, it provides relief from headaches and menstrual pain.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies on Herb Robert focus on its rich composition of phenolic compounds, such as tannins, flavonoids, and phenolic acids. These compounds are responsible for the plant's antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antihyperglycemic, and cytotoxic properties, reinforcing its traditional medicinal uses. In synergy, Herb Robert may be beneficial when combined with other anti-inflammatory herbs, enhancing overall wellness.

How to Use:

Brew a tea: Steep a small handful of Herb Robert leaves in hot water for 5-10 minutes. Enjoy this herbal tea to aid digestion and provide general wellness.

Robert geranium

Salad Addition: Incorporate 1 tablespoon of finely chopped Herb Robert leaves into your salads for a lemony flavor and health benefits.

Schisandra chinensis

Schisandra

Adaptogenic and Liver Support

Description: Schisandra, a deciduous woody vine native to Eastern Asia, is known for its clusters of bright red berries and fragrant white-pink flowers. It's often found in Northern China and the Russian Far East.

Medicinal Uses: Revered in traditional Chinese medicine, Schisandra boosts liver health,

increases physical and mental stamina, and balances energy. As an adaptogen, it helps the body manage stress and supports resilience. Schisandra also enhances cognitive functions like memory, focus, and concentration, thanks to its neuroprotective properties.

Modern Research & Synergies: Studies show Schisandra's components, particularly lignans and triterpenoids, benefit age-related diseases and cancer. Its fruit, containing α-cubebenoate, shows promise in treating allergic inflammation and asthma. Additionally, it's effective against acetaminophen-induced liver damage, highlighting its potential in acute liver failure management. Schisandra synergizes well with other liver-supporting herbs and antioxidants.

Schisandra

How to Use:

Brew a tea with 1-2 teaspoons of dried Schisandra berries steeped in hot water. Alternatively, chew on dried berries directly for a quick, healthful snack.

Hippophae rhamnoides

Sea Buckthorn

Antioxidant and Heart Health Support

Description: Sea buckthorn is a deciduous shrub found across Europe and Asia. Its Greek name, Hippophae, meaning "shiny horse," reflects its historical use: the ancient Greeks fed its leaves to horses for a glossier coat.

Medicinal Uses: Sea buckthorn has a long history in traditional Chinese medicine for treating digestive and skin issues, respiratory problems, and for boosting the immune system. Its berries are rich in vitamins C and E, betacarotene, and flavonoids. These components make it great for reducing inflammation and aiding in wound healing.

Modern Research & Synergies: Modern studies suggest sea buckthorn can lower cholesterol, enhance heart health, and protect the liver. It's been effective in treating gastritis and ulcerative colitis. Its oil, rich in anti-inflammatory properties, may benefit those with psoriasis. Additionally, sea buckthorn shows promise in synthesizing eco-friendly silver nanoparticles, potentially useful as antioxidants and anticancer agents. A synergy to consider: combining sea buckthorn with omega-3 rich oils may enhance its anti-inflammatory effects.

How to Use:

Brew a handful of dried berries in hot water for a revitalizing tea. Mix a tablespoon of sea buckthorn oil into your morning smoothie for an antioxidant boost.

Sea buckthorn

Capsella bursa-pastoris

Shepherd's Purse

Bleeding Control and Inflammation Relief

Description: Shepherd's purse is a simple yet versatile plant, originally from Europe and Asia, but now found worldwide. It's easily recognized by its small, white flowers and unique heart-shaped seed pods, resembling a traditional shepherd's bag.

Medicinal Uses: Shepherd's purse has been a go-to remedy in traditional medicine for various ailments. It's known for its ability to stop bleeding quickly, soothe inflammation and pain, and aid in digestive health. Additionally, it's used to induce uterine contractions during childbirth. In Chinese medicine, it's particularly noted for treating bladder infections. You can find shepherd's purse in different forms like tinctures, infusions, decoctions, and capsules.

Modern Research & Synergies:

Recent studies, including one focusing on women with heavy

menstrual bleeding, have found that a hydroalcoholic extract of shepherd's purse can significantly reduce bleeding. Additionally, the plant's aerial parts have been effective in managing conditions like nephritis, edema, and enteritis, indicating its potential in treating inflammation-related issues. Synergistically, shepherd's purse pairs well with iron supplements to combat anemia, particularly in cases of heavy menstrual bleeding.

Shepherd's purse

How to Use:

Bleeding Control: Brew a teaspoon of dried shepherd's purse in a cup of hot water for a soothing tea.

Digestive Aid: Mix a tablespoon of the fresh or dried herb into your salad for digestive benefits.

Eleutherococcus senticosus

Siberian Ginseng, Eleuthero

Stress Resistance and Cognitive Support

Description: Siberian Ginseng, or Eleuthero, is a hardy shrub native to Eastern Russia, Northeastern China, Korea, and Japan. It's known for its thorny branches and unique umbrella-like flower clusters, leading to small black berries. This resilient herb exemplifies nature's endurance in harsh climates.

Medicinal Uses: For centuries, Siberian Ginseng has been revered in Traditional Chinese Medicine and Russian folk remedies for boosting energy and enhancing overall health. Its most notable property is being an adaptogen, helping the body adapt to various stressors while promoting balance. It's also valued for improving mental focus, cognitive function, and supporting neuroprotective effects.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research indicates that Eleuthero's leaf extract can improve memory functions, with key compounds promoting dendrite growth in brain cells. Additionally, its seed oil has proven antibacterial properties, especially against foodborne pathogens. Siberian Ginseng synergizes well with other cognitive-enhancing herbs, enhancing mental performance.

Siberian Ginseng

How to Use:

Tea: Steep a small amount of dried, sliced roots in hot water to make a refreshing tea, once or twice daily.

Tincture: A few drops can be taken as directed for a quick energy boost.

Galanthus

Snowdrop

Neuroprotective and Mood Enhancing

Description: The snowdrop is a charming, small perennial plant found in Europe and the Middle East. It's easily recognized by its white flowers, each adorned with three inner petals marked by distinctive green tips.

Snowdrop

Medicinal Uses: Snowdrops aren't just pretty; they offer significant health benefits. The plant contains galantamine, an alkaloid in both bulbs and leaves, known for its positive effects on the central nervous system. It's particularly helpful for those with Alzheimer's and dementia, as it can slow their progression. Additionally, it's beneficial for alleviating symptoms of depression, anxiety, and insomnia.

Modern Research & Synergies: Ongoing studies highlight snowdrop's potential as an antioxidant powerhouse, packed with phytochemicals like phenolic acids, flavonoids, and alkaloids. This rich composition may help in reducing the risk and progression of chronic diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular ailments, and neurodegenerative disorders. As a synergy, incorporating snowdrop with other antioxidant-rich herbs like green tea could amplify these protective effects.

How to Use:

Brew a handful of dried snowdrop leaves as a soothing tea.

Crush a few bulbs and include them in a salad for a healthy addition.

Remember, always use snowdrop in moderation and consult with a healthcare professional before adding it to your regimen, especially if you have existing health conditions or are on medication.

Artemisia annua

Sweet Annie, Qing Hao

Fever, Inflammation, and Malaria Relief

Description: Sweet Annie, originally from Asia, is a tall, aromatic herb known for its fern-like leaves and small, yellow-green flowers. It's adaptable and now thrives in various temperate climates globally.

Medicinal Uses: For over two millennia, Sweet Annie has been a staple in traditional Chinese medicine. It's celebrated for treating fevers, inflammation, and even malaria, especially during the humid summer months. Its anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting properties make it valuable for promoting general health. Additionally, it's been used to aid digestion and alleviate gastrointestinal discomfort.

Sweet Annie

Modern Research & Synergies: Research shows Sweet Annie's extracts are beneficial in skin care, reducing inflammation and aiding skin repair. It's also being explored for dental health due to its antimicrobial qualities. Interestingly, its extracts, particularly artemisinin, have been crucial in preventing and treating malaria, although caution is advised due to the bitter taste and potential resistance issues. Synergistically, Sweet Annie pairs well with other anti-inflammatory herbs, enhancing its efficacy in skin and digestive health remedies.

How to Use:

Brew a tea with about 4-5 grams of dried Sweet Annie for general wellness or skin health. Alternatively, use its essential oil in aromatherapy for a calming effect.

Crataeva nurvala

Varuna, Barun, Three-leaved Caper

Urinary Tract and Kidney Health Support

Description: Varuna, also known as the Three-leaved Caper, towers up to 12 meters with trifoliate leaves and clusters of white or pinkish flowers. It's native to India and South Asia, thriving in tropical and subtropical climates, often near riverbanks. Varuna's pointed, ovoid fruits are as distinctive as its stature.

Medicinal Uses: For centuries, Ayurvedic practitioners have turned to Varuna for urinary tract health, including urinary stones and infections. Beyond its role in urinary health, Varuna is also known for supporting kidney function and detoxification. Its potential anti-inflammatory properties may

Varuna

benefit urinary and reproductive system conditions.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has uncovered Varuna's potential

beyond traditional uses. A 2015 study highlighted its nootropic qualities, suggesting benefits for dementia and Alzheimer's symptoms. Its extracts are also noted for antioxidant and anthelmintic properties. Varuna could be effective in treating hypothyroidism and associated hypercholesterolemia. A synergy to consider is pairing Varuna with other herbs known for urinary or cognitive health benefits.

How to Use:

Brew a decoction by boiling Varuna bark until reduced to a quarter of its original volume. Take 30-50 ml daily. Alternatively, use Varuna tablets or capsules as directed by a healthcare provider.

Ageratina altissima

White Snakeroot

Anti-inflammatory and Sedative Properties

Description: White Snakeroot is a North American woodland plant. Historically, it was thought to treat snakebites, but this is a myth. In the 1800s, it was linked to a fatal disease called milk sickness, caused by the plant's toxin, tremetol. This illness was common among midwestern U.S. settlers.

Medicinal Uses: Despite its toxic nature, White Snakeroot has been used in traditional medicine for its anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving properties. It's also been used as a sedative and for treating fever, respiratory, and digestive problems. However, it should only be used under professional guidance due to its potential toxicity and interactions with other medications.

White snakeroot

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies have focused on understanding the anti-inflammatory and sedative effects of White Snakeroot. While direct research on synergies is limited, it's thought that combining it with other anti-inflammatory herbs could enhance its effectiveness. Always consult with a healthcare provider before trying such combinations.

How to Use:

Brew a small amount (1-2 teaspoons) of dried leaves in hot water to make a tea.

For topical use, apply a paste made from crushed leaves to the affected area. Note: Always use minimal quantities due to its potency.

Remember, it's crucial to consult with a healthcare provider before using White Snakeroot, especially if you're taking other medications or have health concerns.

Viola tricolor

Wild Pansy

Cardiovascular and Respiratory Support

Description: Wild Pansy, also known as Johnny-jump-up, love-in-idleness, and heartsease, is a colorful and short-lived herb. It's native to Europe and Asia but has spread widely across North America. You can find it in diverse environments, from rocky areas and dry meadows to sandy beaches. Its flowers are a beautiful mix of yellow, blue, purple, pink, and white.

Medicinal Uses: For centuries, people have turned to Wild Pansy for its health benefits. The ancient Greeks were the first to document its use for respiratory problems, skin conditions, and digestive issues. In the 19th century, Americans used it to ease headaches, colds, and

Wild pansy

respiratory ailments. Today, it's still valued for these uses, especially for its gentle support of the respiratory system.

Modern Research & Synergies: Modern research

aligns with these traditional uses, highlighting Wild Pansy's potential for heart and blood pressure health. Studies have shown it can help relax blood vessels and protect the heart, which might be why it was historically used for heart-related conditions. It works well in combination with other heart-supportive herbs like Hawthorn.

How to Use:

Tea: Steep a teaspoon of dried flowers in a cup of hot water for a soothing tea.

Salad: Add a tablespoon of fresh petals to your salad for a colorful, healthful boost.

Remember, while Wild Pansy has a history of health benefits, always consult with a healthcare provider for advice tailored to your specific needs.

Pausinystalia yohimbe

Yohimbe

Aphrodisiac and Erectile Dysfunction Treatment

Description: Yohimbe is a towering evergreen tree, native to central and western Africa, especially in Cameroon, Gabon, and Zaire. It stands up to 30 meters tall and is adorned with elongated, leathery leaves and small, greenish-white flowers.

Medicinal Uses: For centuries, Yohimbe's bark has been valued in African traditional medicine, particularly as an aphrodisiac. It's known for boosting sexual desire, treating erectile dysfunction, and enhancing fertility. Additionally, it's been used to treat fever, cough, and stomach issues.

Modern Research & Synergies: Research has validated Yohimbe's effectiveness in enhancing sexual health, showing that its bark extract can relax certain muscles and improve male fertility. Combining Yohimbe with other natural libido boosters may amplify its effects.

Yohimbe

How to Use:

Tea: Steep a small amount of Yohimbe bark in boiling water for 10 minutes. Drink occasionally for sexual health benefits.

Note: Be cautious with Yohimbe due to possible side effects like increased heart rate and blood pressure. It's not advisable for people with heart, kidney, or psychiatric conditions, or for pregnant or breastfeeding women. Dosages vary, but a typical range is 5-15 milligrams per day.

Ziziphus jujuba

Ziziphus, Jujube

Sleep Aid and Digestive Health Support

Description: The jujube tree, also known as Ziziphus, is a small tree native to Asia, especially China. It grows up to 10 meters tall, with shiny green leaves and small yellow flowers. The tree produces a fruit called the jujube, which is edible and known for its nutritional value.

Medicinal Uses: Ziziphus has a rich history in traditional medicine, especially in China. It's valued for its calming effects, often used to treat insomnia, anxiety, and stress. The seeds are particularly noted for their sedative properties. Additionally, the fruit aids digestion and is used to treat issues like loss of appetite and diarrhea. Ziziphus also has anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties, making it helpful for skin healing and treating wounds.

Modern Research & Synergies: Recent studies have revealed that Ziziphus is a powerhouse of natural antioxidants, beneficial for overall health. It also shows promise in enhancing immune response and potentially aiding in dementia treatment due to its anti-inflammatory effects. Combining Ziziphus with other antioxidant-rich herbs or foods could enhance these benefits.

Jujube

How to Use:

For sleep and relaxation: Brew tea using a handful of dried jujube fruits.

For digestive health: Add chopped dried jujubes to oatmeal or yogurt.

Calcium

Essential for Bone and Heart Health

Calcium is a vital mineral, playing a crucial role in maintaining strong bones, regulating heart rhythms, and supporting muscle and nerve functions. It's particularly important for the aging population to ensure adequate calcium intake to prevent osteoporosis and support cardiovascular health.

Natural Sources of Calcium:

Dairy Products: Aim for about 3 servings per day. Excellent sources include milk, cheese, and yogurt.

Leafy Greens: Incorporate 2-3 cups daily into your diet. Options include spinach, kale, and collard greens.

Fish with Bones: Include 2 servings weekly. Canned salmon and sardines are great choices.

Fortified Foods: Consume 1-2 servings daily, such as fortified cereals and plant-based milk.

Synergistic Combinations:

Vitamin D: Essential for enhancing calcium absorption. Target 600-800 IU daily, available in fatty fish, through sunlight exposure, and in fortified foods.

Magnesium: Aids in calcium metabolism. Aim for a 2:1 calcium to magnesium ratio; for every 1,000 mg of calcium, include about 500 mg of magnesium. Found in nuts, seeds, and whole grains.

Vitamin K: Supports bone strength in conjunction with calcium. Aim for 90-120 micrograms per day, found in green vegetables and certain dairy products.

Daily Calcium Intake Recommendations:

Adults should aim for approximately 1,000-1,200 mg of calcium per day, adjusting as needed based on dietary intake and health conditions.

Supplemental Tip:

If you opt for calcium carbonate supplements, it's best to take them with meals. Food intake enhances the absorption of calcium carbonate, maximizing its benefits for your body. Remember, supplementation should complement, not replace, a balanced diet rich in natural calcium sources.

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10)

Vital for Cellular Energy and Antioxidant Protection

Coenzyme Q10, commonly known as CoQ10, is a naturally occurring compound essential for energy production and antioxidant protection in the body. It plays a crucial role in the functioning of virtually all cells, especially those in the heart, liver, kidneys, and pancreas. As we age, CoQ10 levels naturally decline, making supplementation increasingly important for maintaining health and vitality.

Natural Sources of CoQ10:

Meat: Particularly heart, liver, and kidney from beef, pork, and chicken.

Fish: High levels in fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, and sardines.

Whole Grains: Sources include brown rice, whole wheat, and oats.

Nuts and Seeds: Especially in sesame seeds and pistachios.

Synergistic Combinations:

Omega-3 Fatty Acids: Found in fatty fish and flaxseeds, omega-3s enhance CoQ10's heart health benefits.

Vitamin E: Works alongside CoQ10 as an antioxidant. Sources include almonds, spinach, and sweet potatoes.

Selenium: A mineral that complements CoQ10's antioxidant function, found in Brazil nuts, seafood, and mushrooms.

Daily CoQ10 Intake Recommendations:

While there is no established daily recommendation, typical dosages in supplements range from 30 to 200 mg. Consult with a healthcare provider to determine the right amount for your needs.

Supplemental Tip:

CoQ10 is fat-soluble, meaning it's best absorbed when taken with a meal containing fats. If supplementing, consider taking your CoQ10 with a healthy fat source, like avocado or olive oil, to maximize absorption. This tip is particularly beneficial for those on statin medications, as these can reduce natural CoQ10 levels in the body.

Fiber

Vital for Digestive Health and More

Fiber is a crucial nutrient for maintaining healthy digestion, regulating blood sugar levels, and supporting heart health.

Natural Sources of Fiber:

Whole Grains: Aim for 6-8 servings daily (e.g., oats, brown rice, whole wheat bread).

Fruits and Vegetables: Include 5-9 servings per day (e.g., apples, berries, carrots, broccoli).

Legumes and Beans: Try for 3-4 servings weekly (e.g., lentils, black beans, chickpeas).

Nuts and Seeds: 1-2 servings daily (e.g., almonds, flaxseeds).

Synergistic Combinations:

Probiotics: Enhance fiber's benefits for gut health. Found in fermented foods like yogurt and kefir.

Prebiotics: These non-digestible carbohydrates help nourish beneficial gut bacteria. Found in foods like garlic, onions, and asparagus.

Daily Fiber Intake:

Adults 50+ should aim for about 21-30 grams of fiber per day.

Supplemental Tip:

When increasing fiber intake, do it gradually and ensure adequate water consumption. This helps to prevent bloating and improves fiber's effectiveness in the body. Also, consider a fiber supplement if dietary changes are challenging, but remember, natural sources are preferable due to additional nutrients they provide. To avoid constipation due to fiber, aim to consume between 8 and 10 cups of water per day.

Glucosamine and Chondroitin

Key Allies in Joint Health and Mobility

Glucosamine and Chondroitin are two supplements often used in tandem to support joint health and mobility. They are especially popular among individuals seeking to alleviate joint discomfort associated with age-related wear and tear.

Natural Sources of Glucosamine and Chondroitin:

Shellfish Shells: Glucosamine is often extracted from the shells of shrimp, crab, and lobster.

Animal Cartilage: Chondroitin is typically sourced from bovine (cow) or avian (chicken) cartilage.

Bone Broth: A natural source of both, especially when made with bones and connective tissues.

Synergistic Combinations:

MSM (Methylsulfonylmethane): Often paired with glucosamine and chondroitin, MSM can support joint health and reduce discomfort.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids: Found in fatty fish, these can complement the anti-inflammatory effects of glucosamine and chondroitin.

Turmeric and Ginger: Both herbs have anti-inflammatory properties and can enhance the efficacy of glucosamine and chondroitin in joint care.

Recommended Daily Intake:

Glucosamine: Usually, 1500 mg per day.

Chondroitin: Typically, 800-1200 mg per day.

Supplemental Tip:

When taking Glucosamine and Chondroitin supplements, consider doing so with a meal that includes healthy fats. This may enhance the absorption of these supplements, especially if they are paired with fat-soluble components like Omega-3 fatty acids. Also, consistency is key - for optimal results, these supplements should be taken regularly over a period of several weeks to months.

Iron

Vital for Energy and Overall Health

Iron is an indispensable mineral crucial for the production of hemoglobin, a component of blood cells that carries oxygen throughout the body. It's essential for maintaining energy levels, supporting immune function, and aiding in cognitive performance.

Natural Sources of Iron:

Red Meat: Aim for 2-3 servings per week (e.g., beef, lamb).

Plant-based Sources: Include daily servings of beans, lentils, tofu, or fortified cereals.

Dark Leafy Greens: Strive for 2 cups daily (e.g., spinach, swiss chard).

Nuts and Seeds: A handful daily can contribute significantly (e.g., pumpkin seeds, almonds).

Synergistic Combinations:

Vitamin C: Enhances iron absorption. Include vitamin C-rich foods like oranges, strawberries, or bell peppers with iron-rich meals.

Folate and Vitamin B12: These vitamins work with iron to create healthy red blood cells. Find them in leafy greens, eggs, and dairy products.

Daily Iron Intake:

Adult men should aim for about 8 mg per day, while women aged 50 and over should aim for about 8 mg per day.

Supplemental Tip:

When supplementing with iron, it's advisable to take it with a source of Vitamin C to enhance absorption. However, avoid taking iron supplements with milk, coffee, or tea, as these can reduce the mineral's absorption.

If you experience stomach discomfort when taking iron supplements, try taking them with a small amount of food.

Remember, iron supplements are best used under the guidance of a healthcare provider, especially for individuals with conditions like hemochromatosis, where iron accumulation can be harmful. Avoid Calcium-Rich Foods with Iron Meals as calcium can interfere with iron absorption. Try to separate your iron and calcium intake by a few hours.

Magnesium

Vital for Nerve and Muscle Function, Bone Health, and Metabolic Regulation

Magnesium plays a crucial role in over 300 enzymatic reactions in the body. It's essential for nerve transmission, muscle relaxation, bone and heart health, and regulating blood sugar and blood pressure.

Natural Sources of Magnesium:

Nuts and Seeds: A handful daily (e.g., almonds, pumpkin seeds).

Whole Grains: Include 2-3 servings per day (e.g., brown rice, quinoa).

Leafy Greens: Aim for 2 cups daily (e.g., spinach, Swiss chard).

Legumes: 1-2 servings daily (e.g., black beans, lentils).

Bananas: One banana per day as a magnesium-rich fruit.

Synergistic Combinations:

Calcium: Balances with magnesium for bone health. Aim for a 2:1 calcium to magnesium ratio.

Vitamin D: Helps in magnesium absorption and function. Include sunlight exposure or 600-800 IU via supplements.

Zinc: Works together with magnesium for immune support. Include foods like seafood or 11 mg of zinc through supplements.

Daily Magnesium Intake:

Adults should aim for about 320-420 mg of magnesium per day, depending on age and gender.

Supplemental Tip:

When supplementing with magnesium, consider magnesium citrate or magnesium glycinate. These forms are better absorbed and gentler on the digestive system compared to other forms like magnesium oxide. Additionally, taking your magnesium supplement in the evening may help improve sleep quality due to its muscle-relaxing properties.

Melatonin

Essential for Sleep Regulation and Antioxidant Support

Melatonin is a natural hormone that plays a crucial role in regulating sleep patterns and also has potent antioxidant properties.

Natural Sources of Melatonin:

Cherries: Enjoy a serving before bedtime.

Nuts and Seeds: Especially almonds and sunflower seeds; a small handful in the evening.

Grains: Rice, barley, and oats contain small amounts of melatonin.

Dairy Products: Milk and yogurt can help boost melatonin levels.

Synergistic Combinations:

Calcium: Aids in the production of melatonin. Include dairy products or leafy greens in your evening snacks.

Magnesium: Promotes relaxation and enhances melatonin production. Include magnesium-rich foods like bananas, avocados, or whole grains in your dinner.

B6 Vitamins: Essential for melatonin synthesis. Found in fish, lean meat, and starchy vegetables. Include these in your evening meal.

Ideal Melatonin Intake:

Natural Production: The body naturally produces melatonin, but levels decrease with age.

Supplementation: If considering supplements, start with a low dose, like 0.5 to 3 mg about an hour before bedtime. Adjust as needed under medical advice.

Supplemental Tip:

Dim the lights and avoid screen time at least an hour before bed. Exposure to light, especially blue light from screens, can inhibit natural melatonin production, impacting your sleep quality. Embracing a dimly lit environment in the evening can enhance your body's natural

melatonin levels and improve sleep.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids (Fish Oil)

Crucial for Brain and Heart Health

Omega-3 fatty acids, commonly found in fish oil, are vital for maintaining heart health, supporting brain function, and reducing inflammation throughout the body.

Natural Sources of Omega-3 Fatty Acids:

Fatty Fish: Aim for 2-3 servings per week (e.g., salmon, mackerel, sardines).

Nuts and Seeds: Include a handful daily (e.g., flaxseeds, chia seeds, walnuts).

Plant Oils: Use in cooking or as a dressing (e.g., flaxseed oil, canola oil).

Fortified Foods: 1-2 servings daily (e.g., certain brands of eggs, yogurt, and milk).

Synergistic Combinations:

Vitamin E: Protects Omega-3 fatty acids from oxidative damage in the body. Aim for 15 mg daily, found in nuts, seeds, and green leafy vegetables.

Antioxidants: Enhance the anti-inflammatory effects of Omega-3s. Found in berries, green tea, and dark chocolate.

Fiber: Helps modulate the body's use of fats. Aim for 25-30 grams daily, found in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Recommended Omega-3 Intake:

Adults should aim for about 250-500 mg of EPA and DHA per day.

Supplemental Tip:

If you opt for a fish oil supplement, consider taking it with a meal that contains fat. Dietary fats help increase the absorption of Omega-3 fatty acids, maximizing their health benefits. Additionally, storing your Omega-3 supplements in the refrigerator can help prevent them from becoming rancid.

Probiotics

Essential for Digestive and Immune Health

Probiotics are live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, provide the human body with many health benefits. They are crucial for a healthy digestive system and play a significant role in supporting immune function.

Natural Sources of Probiotics:

Yogurt: Incorporate 1-2 servings daily, preferably with active or live cultures.

Kefir: A fermented milk drink, try to include a glass daily.

Sauerkraut: Aim for a few tablespoons daily, ensuring it's unpasteurized for live bacteria.

Kimchi: Include in your diet several times a week.

Miso: A fermented soybean paste, great for soups, can be consumed a few times a week.

Tempeh: A fermented soy product, can be a meat substitute several times a week.

Synergistic Combinations:

Fiber-Rich Foods: Prebiotic foods like bananas, onions, and garlic help nourish and increase the effectiveness of probiotics.

Polyphenol-Rich Foods: Such as berries, tea, and dark chocolate, can enhance probiotic growth.

Healthy Fats: Omega-3 fatty acids found in fish and flaxseeds can improve probiotic survival and function.

Daily Probiotic Intake:

While there's no set recommended daily amount, including a variety of fermented foods in your diet can ensure a healthy intake of probiotics.

Supplemental Tip:

When choosing a probiotic supplement, look for one that contains at least 1 billion colony-forming units (CFUs) and includes Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium strains, known for their benefits, with kefir being one of the best sources of all.

For best results, take probiotic supplements on an empty stomach, either first thing in the morning or just before bedtime, as this ensures that the probiotics pass more rapidly through the stomach, reducing the chance of them being killed by stomach acids.

Vitamin B12

Vital for Energy and Nervous System Health

Vitamin B12 is an essential nutrient crucial for maintaining energy levels, supporting nerve function, and aiding in the production of DNA and red blood cells.

Natural Sources of Vitamin

B12:

Animal Products: Aim for 2-3 servings per week (e.g., poultry, fish, meat, eggs).

Dairy: Include 1-2 servings daily (e.g., milk, cheese, yogurt).

Fortified Foods: Consider 1-2 servings daily (e.g., fortified cereals, plant-based milk, nutritional yeast).

Synergistic Combinations:

Folate: Works with B12 in cell and DNA synthesis. Aim for 400 micrograms daily. Found in leafy greens, legumes, and fortified grains.

Vitamin C: Helps with the absorption of B12. Strive for 75-90 milligrams daily. Present in citrus fruits, berries, and bell peppers.

Iron: Complementary for red blood cell production. Adult men should aim for 8 mg, and women 18 mg per day. Available in meats, beans, and fortified cereals.

Daily Vitamin B12 Intake:

Adults should aim for about 2.4 micrograms of Vitamin B12 per day.

Supplemental Tip:

Vitamin B12 absorption can decrease with age due to reduced stomach acid production. For those over 50, consider taking a B12 supplement with your largest meal of the day. The increased food volume can stimulate more stomach acid, enhancing B12 absorption from supplements.

Vitamin C

A Powerhouse for Immune Support and Skin Health

Vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, plays a pivotal role in immune function and skin health. It's a potent antioxidant that helps combat free radical damage and is essential for collagen production.

Natural Sources of Vitamin C:

Citrus Fruits: Aim for 1-2 servings daily (e.g., oranges, lemons, grapefruits).

Berries: Include a handful daily (e.g., strawberries, raspberries, blackberries).

Bell Peppers: Try to add these to meals regularly (e.g., in salads, stir-fries).

Dark Green Vegetables: Incorporate 2-3 cups weekly (e.g., broccoli, Brussels sprouts, spinach).

Synergistic Combinations:

Iron: Vitamin C enhances the absorption of iron from plant-based foods. Pair vitamin C-rich foods with iron-rich plant foods (like spinach or lentils) for improved absorption.

Vitamin E: Works together with vitamin C to protect skin health. Include nuts and seeds in your diet for a vitamin E boost.

Flavonoids: These compounds, found in fruits and vegetables, work synergistically with vitamin C to enhance its antioxidant power.

Daily Vitamin C Intake:

Adults should aim for about 65 to 90 milligrams of vitamin C per day, with an upper limit of 2,000 mg daily.

Supplemental Tip:

When taking a vitamin C supplement, consider a time-release formula. This allows for a gradual release of vitamin C into your system, enhancing its absorption and reducing the potential for gastrointestinal discomfort that can occur with high doses.

Vitamin D

Vital for Overall Health and Immunity

Vitamin D is not just a vitamin, it's a prohormone that plays a crucial role in bone health, immune system function, and mood regulation. It's essential for calcium absorption, ensuring strong bones and teeth, and also supports muscle function and cardiovascular health.

Natural Sources of Vitamin D:

Sunlight Exposure: Aim for 10-15 minutes of midday sun exposure several times a week, depending on your skin tone and geographic location.

Fatty Fish: Include servings of salmon, mackerel, or tuna in your diet weekly.

Egg Yolks: Incorporate eggs into your meals, focusing on the yolk.

Fortified Foods: Look for vitamin D fortified milk, cereals, and orange juice.

Synergistic Combinations:

Calcium: Vitamin D is essential for calcium absorption in the gut. Ensure adequate calcium intake through diet or supplements.

Magnesium: Helps convert vitamin D into its active form. Include magnesium-rich foods like leafy greens, nuts, and seeds.

Vitamin K2: Works in tandem with vitamin D to regulate

calcium deposition in bones and teeth. Found in fermented foods like natto, cheese, and sauerkraut.

Daily Vitamin D Intake:

Adults over 50 should aim for 800-1000 IU (20-25 micrograms) per day. However, some individuals may require higher doses, especially in the absence of adequate sun exposure.

Supplemental Tip:

When taking vitamin D supplements, opt for vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) as it is more effective than vitamin D2 at raising and maintaining adequate vitamin D levels in the body. Also, consider getting your vitamin D levels checked through a blood test to tailor your supplementation needs accurately.

Vitamin E

Essential for Skin and Immune Health

Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant that plays a critical role in protecting skin from damage, supporting immune function, and maintaining healthy eyes and blood vessels.

Natural Sources of Vitamin E:

Nuts and Seeds: Incorporate a handful daily (e.g., almonds, sunflower seeds, hazelnuts).

Green Leafy Vegetables: Strive for 2 cups daily (e.g., spinach, Swiss chard, turnip greens).

Plant Oils: Include in daily cooking (e.g., sunflower, safflower, and wheat germ oil).

Fortified Foods: 1-2 servings daily (e.g., fortified cereals, fruit juices).

Synergistic Combinations:

Vitamin C: Enhances the effectiveness of Vitamin E. Include citrus fruits, berries, and bell peppers in your diet.

Selenium: Works in conjunction with Vitamin E as an antioxidant. Aim for 55 micrograms daily. Found in Brazil nuts, seafood, and meats.

Zinc: Supports Vitamin E in skin health and immune function. Recommended daily intake is about 11 mg for men and 8 mg for women. Present in legumes, whole grains, and dairy products.

Daily Vitamin E Intake:

Adults should aim for about 15 mg (22.4 IU) of Vitamin E per day.

Supplemental Tip:

When supplementing with Vitamin E, opt for natural (d-alpha-tocopherol) over synthetic forms (dl-alpha-tocopherol) for better absorption. Additionally, taking Vitamin E supplements with a fat-containing meal can significantly enhance its absorption, as Vitamin E is fat-soluble.

Zinc

Vital for Immune Function and Metabolic Health

Zinc plays a vital role in immune system support, wound healing, DNA synthesis, and cell division. It's also crucial for maintaining a sense of taste and smell.

Natural Sources of Zinc:

Meat: Include servings of beef, pork, or lamb daily.

Shellfish: Aim for 2-3 servings weekly (e.g., oysters, crab, lobster).

Legumes: Incorporate beans, lentils, and chickpeas into meals.

Seeds and Nuts: A handful daily (e.g., pumpkin seeds, cashews).

Synergistic Combinations:

Iron: Essential for immune health along with zinc. Found in red meat, beans, and fortified cereals.

Vitamin C: Enhances zinc absorption. Aim for citrus fruits, berries, and vegetables like bell peppers and broccoli.

Daily Zinc Intake:

Adults should aim for about 11 mg (men) and 8 mg (women) per day.

Supplemental Tip:

Zinc supplements are best absorbed when taken with a protein-rich meal. This helps in maximizing the bioavailability of zinc, especially if you're consuming zinc gluconate or zinc sulfate.

Avoid taking zinc supplements with foods high in calcium or phytic acid (found in whole grains and legumes), as these can inhibit absorption. Zinc partially prevents the body's absorption of copper, so if you take zinc supplements, you'll need to increase your copper intake to make up for the deficiency.

Herbal Recipes

Throughout this book, we've delved deep into the myriad benefits and uses of a plethora of herbs. From the immune-boosting prowess of echinacea to the serene, calming ambiance imparted by lemon balm, there's a treasure trove of knowledge now at your fingertips. As we transition into this section, the focus shifts from understanding to application. Let's embark on a journey of concocting our own herbal blends, harnessing the synergistic power that emerges when certain herbs are paired together.

Presented ahead are a mix of timeless recipes, treasured and handed down through generations, coupled with some of our innovative blends. Every recipe is meticulously crafted, with each herb chosen not just for its individual merit but for its ability to work in harmony with others, creating remedies that target specific ailments such as colds, flu, stress, headaches, or insomnia. This synergy amplifies the benefits and paves the way for a holistic healing experience.

However, it's imperative to approach these herbal blends with a dose of caution. Herbal remedies, though natural, require careful handling. Just as a combination of certain herbs can produce enhanced results, some might not be suitable for all, or might interact negatively with prescribed medications. Thus, always consult with a healthcare professional, especially if you have pre-existing conditions, before venturing into the realm of these remedies.

With safety always in mind, let this section be your playground. Embrace the beauty of these age-old remedies, feel the alchemy of blending, and unearth the profound healing properties herbs have to offer.

Happy brewing and blending!

Easy 4-Step Dos and Don’ts of Creating Herbal Synergies

Creating herbal synergies is both an art and a science. Patience, experimentation, and a deep respect for the natural properties of herbs are key to crafting effective and enjoyable blends that will provide you with amazing health benefits.

The concept of synergy—where the combined effect of herbs is greater than their individual effects alone—is a cornerstone in ancient herbal practices. Herbalists have long known that certain combinations of herbs could yield remedies far more potent than any single herb by itself.

This guide is framed within a simple, four-step approach, designed to be accessible and actionable for both novices and seasoned herbal enthusiasts alike.

Step 1: Understanding Herbal Properties and Interactions

Do

- Identify the specific health goal or therapeutic effect you want to achieve. This could be improving digestion, enhancing sleep, boosting immunity, etc.
- Study the properties, benefits, and potential side effects of each herb.
- Understand how herbs interact with each other and with any medications you might be taking.
- Consider the flavor profile of each herb and how they might blend together.

Don’t

- Combine herbs without understanding their effects. Some herbs can negate or amplify each other’s effects in unintended ways.
- Ignore the contraindications and safety profiles of the herbs. Not all herbs are safe for everyone.

Step 2: Balancing Combinations for Synergy

Do

- Start with a base herb known for its primary benefit, then add complementary herbs to enhance or balance the primary effect.
- Consider the ratio of herbs. Often, less is more when it comes to creating a balanced blend.

Don't

- Overcomplicate the blend. Too many herbs can lead to muddled effects and flavors.
- Assume all beneficial herbs work well together. Some combinations can be counterproductive.

Step 3: Testing and Refining Your Blends

Do

- Start with a simple combination of two or three herbs. Choose one primary herb for the main effect and complementary herbs that support or enhance the primary herb's action.
- Prepare a small batch and observe its effects over a period. Adjust the ratios of ingredients based on your experiences and needs.

Don't

- Over-complicate the mixture with too many herbs. This can lead to unpredictable effects and diminish the primary herb's efficacy.
- Expect immediate results or give up too quickly. Herbal remedies often require consistent use over time to show benefits.

Step 4: Safety and Quality Control

Do

- Keep notes on each version of your blend, documenting the effects and flavors.
- Source high-quality, organic herbs to ensure purity and potency.
- Be aware of the shelf life of your herbs and blends. Store them properly to maintain their efficacy.

Don't

- Use expired or poor-quality herbs. They can be ineffective or harmful.
- Overlook the importance of clean, sanitized equipment when preparing your blends.

Shanon's Go-To Recipes

Discover Shanon's well-tested herbal recipes, carefully curated to offer a wide range of health and well-being benefits. These natural remedies, integrated into her family's daily life, provide relief from pain, promote memory enhancement, and encourage relaxation. Explore these recipes to experience their potential advantages firsthand.

Backyard Painkiller

Natural Analgesic and Sedative

Ingredients:

- Fresh or dried wild lettuce leaves (Lactuca virosa)
- High-proof alcohol (like vodka or everclear)
- A glass jar with a tight-fitting lid
- Cheesecloth or fine mesh strainer
- Amber dropper bottles for storage

Instructions:

1. Harvest Wild Lettuce: Collect fresh wild lettuce leaves. If you're using dried leaves, ensure they are from a reliable source. The best time to harvest is when the plant is flowering.
2. Prepare the Leaves: If you've collected fresh leaves, wash them thoroughly to remove any dirt or debris. Then, chop the leaves into smaller pieces to increase the surface area.
3. Fill the Jar: Place the prepared wild lettuce leaves into the glass jar. If you're using dried leaves, fill the jar about halfway. For fresh leaves, you can fill the jar more since they will shrink as they lose moisture.
4. Add Alcohol: Pour the high-proof alcohol over the leaves until they are completely submerged. The alcohol should come up to about an inch above the level of the leaves.
5. Seal and Store the Jar: Close the jar tightly with the lid. Store it in a cool, dark place. The area should be away from direct sunlight and temperature fluctuations.
6. Shake Regularly: Shake the jar once or twice a day. This helps to extract the active compounds from the wild lettuce into the alcohol.
7. Let It Sit: Allow the mixture to sit for about 4 to 6 weeks. This steeping time is crucial for a potent tincture.
8. Strain the Tincture: After the steeping period, strain the mixture through a cheesecloth or fine mesh strainer into a clean bowl. Squeeze or press the plant material to extract as much liquid as possible.
9. Transfer to Dropper Bottles: Pour the strained tincture into amber dropper bottles. The amber color helps to protect the tincture from light, preserving its potency.
10. Label and Store: Label the bottles with the date and contents. Store the tincture in a cool, dark place. It should last for several years if stored properly.

Usage:

- Dosage: Typically, the dosage is a few drops to a full dropper taken under the tongue or in a small amount of water. However, it's important to start with a lower dose to see how your body reacts.

Wild lettuce

Plantain Poultice

Skin Healing and Anti-Inflammatory

Ingredients:

- Fresh Plantain Leaves (Plantago major or Plantago lanceolata)
- Clean Water
- Optional: A small amount of oil (like olive oil) or honey

Equipment:

- Mortar and pestle or a blender
- Clean cloth or gauze
- Bandage or medical tape

Instructions:

1. Gather Plantain Leaves: Find fresh plantain leaves. Ensure they are clean and free from pesticides or pollutants.
2. Clean the Leaves: Rinse the leaves thoroughly with clean water to remove any dirt or debris.
3. Crush the Leaves: Using a mortar and pestle or a blender, crush the plantain leaves into a paste. If you're using a blender, you might need to add a little water to facilitate blending.
4. Optional Additives: For added soothing properties, you can mix a small amount of olive oil or honey into the paste. This step is optional but can enhance the poultice's soothing and healing properties.
5. Apply the Poultice: Spread the plantain paste evenly onto a clean cloth or gauze.
6. Place on the Affected Area: Apply the cloth or gauze with the plantain paste directly onto the cut or scrape. Ensure that the paste is in contact with the skin.
7. Secure the Poultice: Use a bandage or medical tape to hold the poultice in place.
8. Leave it On: Let the poultice sit for at least an hour, or longer if possible. Plantain has natural anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties that can aid in healing.
9. Remove and Clean: Gently remove the poultice and clean the area with water.
10. Repeat if Necessary: If needed, you can apply a fresh poultice several times a day.

Note:

- Always perform a patch test to check for allergic reactions before applying the poultice to a wound.
- This remedy is for minor cuts and scrapes. Seek professional medical advice for severe injuries.

Plantago lanceolata leaves

Rosemary Memory-Boosting Tincture

Cognitive Enhancement and Hair Health

Ingredients

- Fresh rosemary sprigs (organic if possible)
- High-proof alcohol (such as vodka or grain alcohol)
- A glass jar with a tight-fitting lid
- Dark glass dropper bottles for storage

Instructions

1. Prepare the Rosemary: Rinse the rosemary sprigs under cold water to remove any dirt or impurities. Pat them dry with a clean towel. Then, finely chop the rosemary to increase the surface area for better extraction.
2. Fill the Jar: Place the chopped rosemary in the glass jar, filling it about halfway. It's important not to pack the jar too tightly.
3. Add Alcohol: Pour the high-proof alcohol over the rosemary until the jar is nearly full. Ensure all the rosemary is submerged to prevent any mold growth.
4. Seal and Store: Tightly seal the jar with its lid. Store the jar in a cool, dark place. A cupboard away from direct sunlight is ideal.
5. Let it Steep: Allow the mixture to steep for at least 3 days. Some recipes recommend steeping for up to a few weeks to enhance the potency. Shake the jar gently every day to mix the contents.
6. Strain the Tincture: After the steeping period, strain the mixture using a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth to remove all solid particles. Compost or discard the leftover rosemary.
7. Bottle the Tincture: Transfer the strained liquid into dark glass dropper bottles. The dark glass helps preserve the tincture by protecting it from light.
8. Label and Store: Label your bottles with the date and contents. Store them in a cool, dark place. The tincture can be used for several months, up to a year.

Usage

- For Memory Boosting: Take a small amount of the tincture (usually a few drops) orally, diluted in water or tea. Consult with a healthcare provider for appropriate dosing and to ensure it's safe for you.
- For Hair Growth: Apply a few drops directly to the scalp and massage gently. This can be done several times a week.

Fresh rosemary sprigs

Herbal Haven: A Daily Blend of Thyme, Rosemary, Sage, and Peppermint

Respiratory, Digestive, and Antioxidant Support

Each of the herbs in this recipe is known for its potential health benefits. Thyme and sage are often associated with respiratory health, rosemary for its antioxidants, and peppermint for digestion.

Ingredients

- Thyme (dried or fresh)
- Rosemary (dried or fresh)
- Sage (dried or fresh)
- Peppermint (dried or fresh)
- Honey (optional, for taste)
- Water

Peppermint leaves

Instructions:

1. Measure the Herbs: Take equal parts of thyme, rosemary, sage, and peppermint. If you're making one cup of tea, a good starting point is about 1/4 teaspoon of each herb.
2. Boil Water: Heat water to a near boil. If you're using a kettle, let it whistle, then cool for a minute before pouring.
3. Add Herbs to Teapot: Place the herbs in the teapot or the tea strainer/infuser. If you're using fresh herbs, gently bruise them with your fingers to release more flavor.
4. Steep the Tea: Pour hot water over the herbs. Let them steep for 5-7 minutes. Covering the teapot or pitcher can help retain heat and more of the herbal essence.
5. Strain and Serve: After steeping, remove the tea strainer or pour the tea through a strainer into a cup. This removes the herbs and leaves a clear tea.
6. Add Honey (Optional): If you like a sweeter taste, add a teaspoon of honey to your cup and stir well.

Lemon/Orange Peel Tincture

Natural Digestive Aid and Immune Booster

Ingredients:

- Lemon or orange peels (from organic, pesticide-free fruits)
- High-proof alcohol (such as vodka or grain alcohol)

Equipment:

- Glass jar with a tight-fitting lid
- Fine strainer or cheesecloth
- Small funnel
- Amber glass dropper bottles for storage

Instructions:

1. Thoroughly wash the lemons or oranges.
2. Peel off the skin, trying to get as little of the white pith as possible, as it can impart bitterness.
3. Place the peels into the glass jar. Pour enough alcohol into the jar to completely cover the peels. Seal the jar tightly.
4. Store the jar in a cool, dark place for about one week.
5. Shake the jar gently every day to mix the contents.
6. After a week, open the jar. Strain the liquid through a fine strainer or cheesecloth to remove all the peel pieces.
7. Use a funnel to transfer the strained tincture into amber glass dropper bottles.
8. Label the bottles with the contents and date.

Fresh lemons

Herbal Tea for Arthritis and Joint Pain

Alleviates Arthritis and Joint Discomfort

Ingredients:

- Fresh ginger root
- Fresh turmeric root (or turmeric powder if fresh is not available)
- Black pepper (ground)
- Honey (optional, for taste)
- Lemon (optional, for taste)
- Water

Turmeric

Instructions:

1. Peel and thinly slice about an inch of fresh ginger root.
2. Do the same with the turmeric root. If you're using turmeric powder, about half a teaspoon should suffice.
3. Measure out a quarter teaspoon of ground black pepper.
4. In a pot, bring about two cups of water to a boil.
5. Once the water is boiling, add the sliced ginger and turmeric to the pot.
6. If you're using turmeric powder, ensure it's well dispersed in the water.
7. Reduce the heat and let the mixture simmer for approximately 10-15 minutes. This allows the flavors and nutrients to infuse into the water.
8. After simmering, add the ground black pepper to the pot. Black pepper enhances

the absorption of curcumin, the active compound in turmeric.

9. Remove the pot from heat. Strain the tea into a cup to remove the solid pieces of ginger and turmeric.
10. Add honey and/or a squeeze of lemon to your tea for additional flavor and health benefits.
11. Drink this tea warm. For the best results, consume it regularly, ideally once or twice a day.

Ashwagandha Herbal Tea

Promotes Relaxation and Stress Relief

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon Ashwagandha powder
- 1 cup water
- Honey or maple syrup (optional, for sweetness)
- A slice of lemon or ginger (optional, for flavor)

Instructions:

1. Boil Water: Start by boiling a cup of water in a small pot or a kettle.
2. Add Ashwagandha: Once the water is boiling, add a teaspoon of Ashwagandha powder. If you prefer a milder taste, you can use a little less than a teaspoon.
3. Simmer: Reduce the heat and let the mixture simmer for about 10 minutes. This allows the water to absorb the essence of the herb.
4. Optional Add-ins: For an enhanced flavor, consider adding a slice of lemon or ginger during the simmering process.
5. Strain: After simmering, strain the tea into a cup to remove the herb residues.
6. Sweeten (Optional): If you prefer a sweeter taste, add honey or maple syrup according to your preference.

Ashwagandha powder

Usnea Tincture Recipe

Supports Antibacterial Defense and Gut Health

Usnea, also known as Old Man's Beard, is a type of lichen that grows on trees in various environments. It's known for its antibiotic properties and potential benefits in managing obesity by improving gut bacteria. Here's a step-by-step guide to making a simple Usnea tincture, which is one of the common ways to use this herb:

Ingredients:

- Fresh Usnea lichen - as much as you can gather
- High-proof alcohol (like vodka or grain alcohol) - enough to cover the Usnea in a jar

Instructions:

1. Drying (Optional): You can use the Usnea fresh or let it dry for a few days if you prefer.
2. Preparation: Break the Usnea into smaller pieces to increase the surface area.
3. Infusing with Alcohol: Place the Usnea in your glass jar, and pour enough high-proof alcohol over it to completely cover the lichen. High-proof alcohol helps extract the active compounds effectively.
4. Sealing and Storing: Close the jar tightly and store it in a cool, dark place. Let it sit for at least 4-6 weeks. This duration allows the alcohol to extract the active compounds from the Usnea.
5. Shaking: Shake the jar daily to help with the extraction process.
6. Straining: After 4-6 weeks, strain the mixture through a fine strainer or cheesecloth into another container to remove all solid parts.
7. Bottling: Transfer the strained tincture into a dark dropper bottle for easy use and storage.
8. Dosage: The typical dosage is a few drops up to three times a day, but it's best to consult with a healthcare provider for personalized advice, especially when using it for specific health concerns like obesity.

Notes:

- Quality of Usnea: Ensure the Usnea you gather is healthy and clean.
- Alcohol Substitute: If you prefer not to use alcohol, glycerin can be a substitute, but the extraction might not be as potent.
- Safety: While Usnea is generally safe, it's important to consult with a healthcare professional, especially if you have specific health conditions or are taking medications.
- Storage: Store the tincture in a cool, dark place. It can last for several years if stored properly.

Usnea lichen

Liver Restoration Tonic

Liver Health and Detoxification

Creating a liver restoration tonic using the seeds of a plant known for its liver-supporting properties, Milk Thistle (which contains silymarin), can be a great way to support liver health. Here's a step-by-step recipe:

Ingredients:

- Milk Thistle seeds - 2 tablespoons (crushed or powdered)
- Water - 2 cups
- Lemon juice - 1 tablespoon (optional, for flavor)
- Honey or another sweetener (optional, to taste)
- Equipment:
- Grinder or mortar and pestle (for crushing seeds)
- Saucepan
- Strainer or cheesecloth
- Bottle or jar for storage

Powdered milk thistle seeds

Instructions:

1. Crush the Seeds: Begin by grinding the Milk Thistle seeds into a fine powder using a grinder or mortar and pestle. This increases the surface area for extraction.
2. Boil Water: Heat 2 cups of water in a saucepan until it starts to boil.
3. Add Milk Thistle: Add the crushed Milk Thistle seeds to the boiling water. Reduce the heat and let it simmer for about 20 minutes. This process extracts the silymarin and other beneficial compounds from the seeds.
4. Strain the Mixture: After simmering, remove the saucepan from heat and let it cool slightly. Strain the mixture through a strainer or cheesecloth into a clean container, removing all the solid particles.
5. Add Flavorings: If desired, add lemon juice and honey to taste. This can make the tonic more palatable.
6. Store the Tonic: Transfer the tonic to a bottle or jar. Store it in a cool, dry place or in the refrigerator.
7. Dosage: Consume 1-2 tablespoons of the tonic daily. It's best to consult with a healthcare provider for the appropriate dosage for your specific needs.

Echinacea Cold and Flu Remedy

Boosts Immune System, Alleviates Cold & Flu Symptoms

Echinacea root has been shown to support the immune system, enhancing the body's defense against infections. Elderberry, rich in antioxidants, works in tandem with echinacea to reduce the duration and severity of cold symptoms, while ginger adds anti-inflammatory benefits, soothing sore throats and reducing nausea.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon dried echinacea root
- 1 tablespoon dried elderberry
- 1 tablespoon grated ginger
- 1 quart of water

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, add the echinacea root, elderberry and ginger.
3. Reduce the heat to low and let the mixture simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard the solids.
5. Allow the tea to cool to a comfortable drinking temperature.
6. Drink up to 3 cups of the tea per day while you are experiencing cold or flu symptoms.

Echinacea tea

Lemon Balm and Chamomile Stress Relief Tea

Soothes Stress and Anxiety, Promotes Relaxation

Lemon balm leaves contain natural compounds that help calm the nervous system, reducing feelings of stress and anxiety. Chamomile flowers, renowned for their soothing properties, enhance this calming effect, while passionflower leaves contribute to reducing insomnia and anxiety, creating a synergistic blend that promotes relaxation and mental well-being.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon dried lemon balm leaves
- 1 tablespoon dried chamomile flowers
- 1 tablespoon dried passionflower leaves
- 1 quart of water

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, add the lemon balm leaves, chamomile flowers, and passionflower leaves.
3. Reduce the heat to low and let the mixture simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard the solids.
5. Allow the tea to cool to a comfortable drinking temperature.
6. Drink 1-3 cups of tea per day to help reduce stress and anxiety.

Feverfew and Willow Bark Headache Tincture

Relieves Headaches and Migraines

Feverfew leaves contain compounds that help reduce inflammation and muscle spasms, key contributors to headaches and migraines. Willow bark acts as a natural pain reliever due to its salicin content, which the body converts into salicylic acid, a precursor of aspirin. Meadowsweet, with its anti-inflammatory and soothing properties, complements the blend, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the tincture.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup dried feverfew leaves
- 1/4 cup dried willow bark
- 1/4 cup dried meadowsweet
- 1 cup of high-proof alcohol (such as vodka)

White willow bark

Instructions:

1. In a jar, combine the feverfew leaves, willow bark and meadowsweet.
2. Pour just enough alcohol over the herbs, making sure they are fully submerged.
3. Close the jar and store it in a cool, dark place for 2-4 weeks, shaking it daily.
4. After 2-4 weeks, strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer, discarding the solids.
5. The tincture is now ready to use. Take 15-20 drops in a little water, up to 3 times a day.

Valerian Root and Hops Sleep Aid Tea

Promotes Restful Sleep, Combats Insomnia

Valerian root is known for its calming properties, which help ease the mind into a restful state, essential for combating insomnia. Hops contribute sedative effects that further promote relaxation and sleep, while passionflower leaves act synergistically to enhance the overall soothing impact of the tea, making it an effective natural remedy for sleeplessness.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon dried valerian root
- 1 tablespoon dried hops
- 1 tablespoon dried passionflower leaves
- 1 quart of water

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, add the valerian root, hops, and passionflower leaves.
3. Reduce the heat to low and let the mixture simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard the solids.
5. Allow the tea to cool to a comfortable drinking temperature.
6. Drink 1-2 cups of the tea before bedtime to help promote sleep.

Immune-Boosting Elderberry Syrup

Strengthens Immunity, Eases Cold & Flu Symptoms

Elderberries are a powerhouse for immune support, rich in vitamins and antioxidants that help fortify the body's defenses. Honey adds natural antibacterial and soothing properties, enhancing the syrup's effectiveness in easing cold and flu symptoms. Optional ingredients like cinnamon, cloves, and ginger offer additional immune support and anti-inflammatory benefits, creating a synergistic blend that not only boosts immunity but also provides comfort during illness.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups of fresh elderberries or 1 cup of dried elderberries
- 2 cups of water
- 1 cup of honey
- 1 cinnamon stick (optional)
- 2 cloves (optional)
- 1 tsp of grated ginger (optional)

Elderberry syrup

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, combine the elderberries, water, honey, cinnamon stick, cloves, and ginger if using.
2. Bring the mixture to a boil and then reduce the heat and let it simmer for about 45 minutes to an hour, or until the liquid has reduced by about half.
3. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer or cheesecloth, discarding the solids.
4. Allow the syrup to cool.
5. Store the syrup in a clean glass jar with a tight-fitting lid.
6. Take 1-2 tablespoons of syrup per day as a preventative measure or every 2-3 hours when symptoms appear.

Immune-Boosting Elderberry Gummies

Enhances Immune System and Cold Prevention

Elderberry syrup is a powerhouse of antioxidants and vitamins, essential for enhancing the immune system and potentially shortening the duration of colds. Honey adds natural sweetness and its antibacterial properties support immune health, while gelatin gives a chewy texture and contributes to gut health, an important aspect of overall immunity.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of elderberry syrup (can be store-bought or homemade)
- 1/4 cup of honey
- 2 tablespoons of gelatin
- silicone mold

Instructions:

1. In a small saucepan, heat the elderberry syrup and honey over medium heat until it comes to a simmer.
2. Remove the saucepan from the heat and add in the gelatin, stirring until it is fully dissolved.
3. Pour the mixture into a silicone mold, and place the mold in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or until the gummies are fully set.
4. Remove the gummies from the mold and store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator.
5. Take 2-3 gummies per day as a preventative measure or every 2-3 hours when symptoms appear.

Anti-Inflammatory Turmeric and Ginger Capsules

Alleviates Inflammation and Eases Pain

Turmeric, with its active compound curcumin, is renowned for its potent anti-inflammatory properties and pain relief, especially in joint and muscle discomfort. Ginger complements turmeric by offering additional anti-inflammatory effects and aiding in digestive health, enhancing the overall efficacy of the capsules.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of turmeric powder
- 1/4 cup of ginger powder
- empty capsules

Instructions:

1. In a small mixing bowl, combine the turmeric powder and ginger powder.
2. Using a small spoon or a capsule filling machine, fill the empty capsules with the turmeric and ginger powder mixture.
3. Close the capsules and store them in a cool, dry place.
4. Take 2-3 capsules per day as needed for inflammation and pain relief.

Peppermint and Fennel Digestive Aid Tea

Relieves Indigestion and Reduces Bloating

Peppermint soothes the digestive tract and reduces bloating with its antispasmodic properties, while chamomile offers calming effects, easing stress-related digestive issues. Fennel seeds, rich in volatile oils, are key in relieving gas and bloating, making this blend a comprehensive digestive aid.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of dried peppermint leaves
- 2 tablespoons of dried chamomile flowers
- 2 tablespoons of dried fennel seeds
- 4 cups of water

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, add the peppermint leaves, chamomile flowers and fennel seeds.
3. Reduce the heat to low and let the mixture simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard the solids.
5. Allow the tea to cool to a comfortable drinking temperature.
6. Drink up to 3 cups of the tea after meals to help alleviate symptoms of indigestion and bloating.

Anti-Anxiety Tincture

Promotes Calmness and Reduces Anxiety

Skullcap leaves provide a mild sedative effect that helps in alleviating nervous tension, while passionflower acts as a natural anxiolytic, reducing anxiety without causing drowsiness. Kava root synergistically enhances these effects, promoting muscle relaxation and mental calmness, making this blend effective for managing anxiety symptoms.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup of dried skullcap leaves
- 1/4 cup of dried passionflower leaves
- 1/4 cup of dried kava root
- 1 cup of high-proof alcohol (such as vodka)

Instructions:

1. In a jar, combine the skullcap leaves, passionflower leaves and kava root.
2. Pour the alcohol over the herbs, making sure they are fully submerged.
3. Close the jar and store it in a cool, dark place for 2-4 weeks, shaking it daily.
4. After 2-4 weeks, strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer, discarding the solids.
5. The tincture is now ready to use. Take 15-20 drops in a little water, up to 3 times a day as needed.

Arnica and Comfrey Bruise Cream

Alleviates Bruising and Sprain Discomfort

Arnica oil is renowned for its anti-inflammatory properties, effectively reducing bruising and swelling. Comfrey oil complements this by aiding in the healing of sprains, thanks to its allantoin content that promotes cell regeneration. The blend of beeswax, shea butter, and coconut oil creates a soothing base that enhances the absorption of these active ingredients, making the cream both healing and moisturizing.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of arnica oil
- 1/2 cup of comfrey oil
- 1/4 cup of beeswax
- 1/4 cup of shea butter
- 1/4 cup of coconut oil

(The beeswax, shea butter, and coconut oil make for a great combination, but in a pinch, you can use coconut oil exclusively)

Instructions:

1. In a double boiler, combine the arnica oil, comfrey oil, beeswax, shea butter and coconut oil.
2. Heat the mixture over low heat, stirring occasionally until everything is fully melted and combined.
3. Remove the mixture from the heat and pour it into a clean, glass jar.
4. Allow the cream to cool and solidify.
5. Apply the cream to bruises and sprains as needed, massaging it gently into the skin.
6. Repeat the application 2-3 times a day until the bruise or sprain has fully healed.

Arnica cream

Aloe Vera Sunburn Soother Gel

Soothes Sunburn and Reduces Skin Inflammation

Aloe vera gel is a natural anti-inflammatory and moisturizer, renowned for its cooling effect on sunburned skin. Witch hazel adds to this by reducing swelling and repairing damaged skin. The combination of lavender and peppermint essential oils not only soothes the burn but also provides a calming scent, with peppermint adding a refreshing, cooling sensation, making this gel a comprehensive remedy for sunburn relief.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of fresh aloe vera gel
- 1/4 cup of witch hazel
- 1/4 cup of lavender essential oil
- 1/4 cup of peppermint essential oil

Aloe vera gel

Instructions:

1. In a blender or food processor, blend the aloe vera gel until it is a smooth texture.
2. In a small bowl, mix together the witch hazel, lavender essential oil and peppermint essential oil.
3. Pour the essential oil mixture into the aloe vera gel and stir until well combined.
4. Pour the mixture into a clean glass jar and store it in the refrigerator.
5. Apply the gel to sunburned skin as needed, making sure to avoid contact with your eyes.

Anise and Caraway Digestive Tea

Eases Indigestion, Bloating, and Gas

Anise seeds, known for their natural carminative properties, help in reducing gas and bloating by relaxing digestive muscles. Caraway seeds synergistically complement anise by stimulating digestion and alleviating symptoms of indigestion, together creating an effective remedy for gastrointestinal discomfort.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of dried anise seeds
- 2 tablespoons of dried caraway seeds
- 4 cups of water

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, add the anise seeds and caraway seeds.
3. Reduce the heat to low and let the mixture simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard the solids.
5. Allow the tea to cool to a comfortable drinking temperature.
6. Drink up to 3 cups of the tea after meals to help alleviate symptoms of indigestion, bloating, and gas.

Ashwagandha and Holy Basil Anti-Stress Tincture

Reduces Stress and Anxiety, Promotes Tranquility

Ashwagandha, an adaptogenic herb, assists in balancing stress hormones and enhancing mental resilience. Holy basil, also an adaptogen, complements ashwagandha by promoting emotional well-being and reducing anxiety, creating a synergistic blend that fosters a sense of calm and reduced stress levels.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup of dried ashwagandha root
- 1/4 cup of dried holy basil leaves
- 1 cup of high-proof alcohol (such as vodka)

Ashwagandha

Instructions:

1. In a jar, combine the ashwagandha root and holy basil leaves.
2. Pour the alcohol over the herbs, making sure they are fully submerged.
3. Close the jar and store it in a cool, dark place for 2-4 weeks, shaking it daily.
4. After 2-4 weeks, strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer, discarding the solids.
5. The tincture is now ready to use. Take 15-20 drops in a little water, up to 3 times a day as needed to help reduce stress and anxiety.

Cascara Sagrada and Dandelion Laxative Tea

Promotes Regular Bowel Movements, Alleviates Constipation

Cascara sagrada bark acts as a natural laxative, stimulating bowel movements and improving intestinal motility. Dandelion root aids this process by supporting liver function and promoting digestion, together creating a gentle yet effective herbal synergy for relieving constipation.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of dried cascara sagrada bark
- 2 tablespoons of dried dandelion root
- 4 cups of water

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, add the cascara sagrada bark and dandelion root.
3. Reduce the heat to low and let the mixture simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard the solids.
5. Allow the tea to cool to a comfortable drinking temperature.
6. Drink up to 3 cups of the tea to help promote regular bowel movements and alleviate constipation. Experiment with your dosage slowly, as some sources of cascara sagrada bark are stronger than others.

Cat's Claw and Boswellia Joint Support Capsules

Relieves Joint Pain and Reduces Inflammation

Cat's claw possesses anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting properties, making it effective in reducing joint pain and swelling. Boswellia, known for its potent anti-inflammatory effects, synergistically enhances the efficacy of cat's claw, significantly alleviating discomfort in joint conditions like arthritis.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of cat's claw powder
- 1/2 cup of boswellia powder
- empty capsules

Instructions:

1. In a small mixing bowl, combine the cat's claw powder and boswellia powder.
2. Using a small spoon or a capsule filling machine, fill the empty capsules with the cat's claw and boswellia powder mixture.
3. Close the capsules and store them in a cool, dry place.
4. Take 2-3 capsules per day as needed for joint support and inflammation relief.

Thyme and Mullein Respiratory Support Tea

Eases Respiratory Discomfort and Mucus

Thyme provides natural antispasmodic properties, aiding in the relief of coughing and other bronchial symptoms, while mullein, an effective expectorant, works to clear mucus from the lungs, easing respiratory discomfort. Together, they form a potent blend for soothing respiratory ailments.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of dried thyme leaves
- 2 tablespoons of dried mullein leaves
- 4 cups of water

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, add the thyme and mullein leaves.
3. Reduce the heat to low and let the mixture simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard the solids.
5. Allow the tea to cool to a comfortable drinking temperature.
6. Drink 2-3 cups of the tea daily to help alleviate symptoms of respiratory conditions

Mullein tea

Eucalyptus and Peppermint Chest Rub

Relieves Congestion and Soothes Breathing

Eucalyptus, known for its powerful decongestant properties, helps clear nasal and chest congestion, while peppermint, with its menthol content, soothes breathing and provides a cooling sensation, offering relief from cough and cold symptoms. Together, they create an effective chest rub that eases respiratory discomfort.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup of coconut oil
- 1/4 cup of beeswax
- 2 tablespoons of dried eucalyptus leaves
- 2 tablespoons of dried peppermint leaves
- 10-15 drops of eucalyptus essential oil
- 10-15 drops of peppermint essential oil

Instructions:

1. In a double boiler, melt the coconut oil and beeswax.
2. Once melted, remove the mixture from the heat and add the dried eucalyptus and peppermint leaves and essential oils.
3. Stir well.
4. Pour the mixture into a clean, glass jar and let it cool and solidify.
5. Apply the rub to the chest and back as needed to help clear congestion and alleviate symptoms of respiratory conditions.

Garlic and Ginger Blood Pressure Support Tincture

Promotes Heart Health and Blood Pressure Balance

Garlic, known for its natural blood pressure-lowering properties, works synergistically with ginger, which also supports cardiovascular health through its anti-inflammatory and blood-thinning effects. This combination enhances overall heart health while promoting balanced blood pressure.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup of fresh minced garlic
- 1/4 cup of fresh minced ginger
- 1 cup of high-proof alcohol (such as vodka)

Instructions:

1. In a jar, combine the minced garlic and ginger.
2. Pour the alcohol over the herbs, making sure they are fully submerged.
3. Close the jar and store it in a cool, dark place for 2-4 weeks, shaking it daily.
4. After 2-4 weeks, strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer, discarding the solids.
5. The tincture is now ready to use. Take 15-20 drops in a little water, up to 3 times a day.

Garlic and ginger slices

Turmeric and Astragalus Immune Boosting Tonic

Strengthens Immunity and Enhances Energy

Turmeric powder, with its curcumin content, offers powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant benefits, supporting overall immune health. Astragalus powder enhances this effect by stimulating the immune system, and when combined with ginger's gastrointestinal soothing properties and lemon juice's vitamin C, this tonic becomes a potent ally for immunity and energy.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup of turmeric powder
- 1/4 cup of astragalus powder
- 1/4 cup of fresh ginger
- 1/4 cup of fresh lemon juice
- 4 cups of water
- honey to taste

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, add the turmeric powder, astragalus powder, ginger and lemon juice.
3. Reduce the heat to low and let the mixture simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard the solids.
5. Allow the tonic to cool to a comfortable drinking temperature.
6. Drink up to 2 cups of the tonic daily, sweetened with honey to taste.

Ashwagandha and Reishi Mushroom Anti-cancer Tincture

Supports Immune Health and Potential Anti-Cancer Benefits

Ashwagandha powder, known for its adaptogenic properties, helps in balancing stress hormones, thereby supporting immune health. Reishi mushroom, revered for its potential anti-cancer benefits, enhances this tincture by boosting immunity and offering antioxidant protection, making this combination particularly potent for overall well-being and resilience against diseases.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup of ashwagandha powder
- 1/4 cup of reishi mushroom powder
- 1 cup of high-proof alcohol (such as vodka)

Instructions:

1. In a jar, combine the ashwagandha powder and reishi mushroom powder.
2. Pour the alcohol over the herbs, making sure they are fully submerged.
3. Close the jar and store it in a cool, dark place for 2-4 weeks, shaking it daily.
4. After 2-4 weeks, strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer, discarding the solids.
5. The tincture is now ready to use. Take 15-20 drops in a little water, up to 3 times a day.

Ashwagandha and reishi mushroom

Milk Thistle and Dandelion Liver Detox Tincture

Enhances Liver Detoxification and Function

Milk thistle seeds are known for their liver-protective qualities, aiding in detoxification and rejuvenation. Dandelion root complements this by supporting liver function and promoting the removal of toxins, creating a synergistic effect that enhances overall liver health.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup of milk thistle seeds
- 1/4 cup of dandelion root
- 1 cup of high-proof alcohol (such as vodka)

Instructions:

1. In a jar, combine the milk thistle seeds and dandelion root.
2. Pour the alcohol over the herbs, making sure they are fully submerged.
3. Close the jar and store it in a cool, dark place for 2-4 weeks, shaking it daily.
4. After 2-4 weeks, strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer, discarding the solids.
5. The tincture is now ready to use. Take 15-20 drops in a little water, up to 3 times a day.

Turmeric and Ginger Detox Tea

Promotes Digestive Health and Detoxification

Turmeric, with its curcumin content, offers potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant benefits, aiding in detoxification and digestion. Ginger complements this by stimulating digestion and circulation, enhancing the body's natural cleansing processes, and together they create a synergistic blend that promotes overall digestive health.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup of turmeric powder
- 1/4 cup of ginger powder
- 4 cups of water
- honey to taste

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, add the turmeric powder and ginger powder.
3. Reduce the heat to low and let the mixture simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard the solids.
5. Allow the tea to cool to a comfortable drinking temperature.
6. Drink 2-3 cups of the tea daily, sweetened with honey to taste.

Turmeric and honey

Calendula and Comfrey Bruise and Wound Salve

Accelerates Healing of Bruises and Wounds

Calendula oil is renowned for its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties, which help in speeding up the healing of wounds and easing skin irritations. Comfrey oil synergizes with calendula by promoting cell regeneration, further accelerating the healing process of bruises and wounds. Together, these oils form a potent combination that enhances skin repair and reduces healing time.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of calendula oil
- 1/2 cup of comfrey oil
- 1/4 cup of beeswax
- 1/4 cup of cocoa butter
- 1/4 cup of coconut oil

Instructions:

1. In a double boiler, combine the calendula oil, comfrey oil, beeswax, cocoa butter and coconut oil.
2. Heat the mixture over low heat, stirring occasionally until everything is fully melted and combined.
3. Remove the mixture from the heat and pour it into a clean, glass jar.
4. Allow the salve to cool and solidify.
5. Apply the salve to bruises, wounds and minor skin irritations as needed, massaging it gently into the skin.
6. Repeat the application 2-3 times a day until the bruise or wound has fully healed.

Calendula salve

Hawthorn and Lime Leaf Heart Tonic Tea

Enhances Heart Health and Reduces Anxiety

Hawthorn leaves and berries are renowned for their heart-protective properties, aiding in improved circulation and blood pressure regulation. Lime leaves contribute a calming effect, helping to reduce anxiety and promote relaxation, making this tea a synergistic blend for both heart health and mental well-being.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of dried hawthorn leaves and berries
- 2 tablespoons of dried lime leaves
- 4 cups of water

Instructions:

1. In a medium-sized pot, bring the water to a boil.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, add the hawthorn leaves and berries and lime leaves.
3. Reduce the heat to low and let the mixture simmer for 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard the solids.
5. Allow the tea to cool to a comfortable drinking temperature.
6. Drink 2-3 cups of the tea daily to help improve cardiovascular health, lower blood pressure and reduce anxiety.

Calendula and Chamomile Healing Salve

Soothes and Repairs Skin Conditions

Calendula oil is prized for its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties, aiding in the rapid healing of skin irritations. Chamomile oil complements this by providing soothing relief to inflamed skin, enhancing the salve's effectiveness for conditions like eczema and sunburn. Together, these oils form a potent combination for skin repair and comfort.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of calendula oil
- 1/2 cup of chamomile oil
- 1/4 cup of beeswax
- 1/4 cup of cocoa butter
- 1/4 cup of coconut oil

Calendula and chamomile

Instructions:

1. In a double boiler, combine the calendula oil, chamomile oil, beeswax, cocoa butter, and coconut oil.
2. Heat the mixture over low heat, stirring occasionally until everything is fully melted and combined.
3. Remove the mixture from the heat and pour it into a clean, glass jar.
4. Allow the salve to cool and solidify.
5. Apply the salve to affected areas of the skin as needed, massaging it gently into the skin. Repeat the application 2-3 times a day until the skin condition has fully healed.

Aloe Vera and Tea Tree Acne Treatment Gel

Targets Acne and Prevents Breakouts

Aloe vera gel is renowned for its skin-soothing and moisturizing properties, which can help reduce inflammation and promote healing in acne-prone skin. Tea tree oil, a powerful natural antiseptic, works synergistically with aloe vera to target acne-causing bacteria, while witch hazel acts as an astringent, tightening pores and reducing oiliness, thereby preventing future breakouts.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of fresh aloe vera gel
- 1/4 cup of tea tree oil
- 1/4 cup of witch hazel

Instructions:

1. In a blender or food processor, blend the aloe vera gel until it is smooth.
2. In a small bowl, mix together the tea tree oil and witch hazel.
3. Pour the essential oil mixture into the aloe vera gel and stir until well combined.
4. Pour the mixture into a clean, glass jar and store it in the refrigerator.
5. Apply the gel to affected areas of the skin as needed, being sure to avoid contact with the eyes.

Aloe vera and tea tree oil

Maca and Ashwagandha Hormonal Balance Capsules

Balances Hormones and Alleviates Menopausal Symptoms

Maca powder is a natural adaptogen known for its ability to regulate, support, and balance hormonal levels, which can alleviate symptoms of menopause and menstrual irregularities. Ashwagandha, another powerful adaptogen, works in harmony with maca to reduce stress and anxiety, which are often linked to hormonal imbalances, enhancing overall hormonal balance and reproductive health.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of maca powder
- 1/2 cup of ashwagandha powder
- empty capsules

Instructions:

1. In a small mixing bowl, combine the maca powder and ashwagandha powder.
2. Using a small spoon or a capsule filling machine, fill the empty capsules with the maca and ashwagandha powder mixture.
3. Close the capsules and store them in a cool, dry place.
4. Take 2-3 capsules per day as needed to help balance hormones and alleviate symptoms associated with menstrual irregularities, menopause, and infertility.

Maca and ashwagandha powder

Vitex and Black Cohosh Menopause Support Tincture

Eases Menopause Symptoms like Hot Flashes and Mood Swings

Vitex berries, traditionally used for hormonal balance, particularly in women, help regulate estrogen and progesterone levels, thereby reducing menopause-related symptoms like mood swings and hormonal acne. Black cohosh root complements vitex by specifically targeting hot flashes and night sweats, offering a natural synergy that enhances overall relief from menopausal discomfort.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup of dried vitex berries
- 1/4 cup of dried black cohosh root
- 1 cup of high-proof alcohol (such as vodka)

Instructions:

1. In a jar, combine the vitex berries and black cohosh root.
2. Pour the alcohol over the herbs, making sure they are fully submerged.
3. Close the jar and store it in a cool, dark place for 2-4 weeks, shaking it daily.
4. After 2-4 weeks, strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer, discarding the solids.
5. The tincture is now ready to use. Take 15-20 drops in a little water, up to 3 times a day as needed to help alleviate symptoms of menopause.

Sunrise Elixir: Herbal Tincture for Energy and Wellbeing

Mood Enhancement and Nerve Soothing

St. John's Wort in this Sunrise Elixir acts as a mood stabilizer and nerve tonic, countering depression and anxiety. Lemon Balm enhances this effect by promoting relaxation and easing stress, while Nettle contributes vital nutrients and anti-inflammatory properties, supporting overall physical wellness and energy levels. Together, they create a synergy that uplifts mood and soothes the nervous system, making this tincture an effective solution for enhancing well-being.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh St. John's Wort flowers
- 1 cup fresh Lemon Balm leaves
- 1 cup fresh Nettle leaves
- 40% or higher Alcohol (vodka or brandy are great options), enough to cover the herbs
- 1 glass jar with a tight lid
- Dark glass dropper bottles for storage

Nettle leaves and tincture

Instructions:

1. Use fresh herbs for optimal results. If using dried herbs, use half the specified amount.
2. Chop or bruise the herbs to enhance the extraction of their properties.
3. Place the herbs in a glass jar and pour alcohol over the herbs, making sure they are fully submerged.
4. Secure the jar lid tightly and shake vigorously.
5. Keep the jar in a cool, dark place, shaking it daily for two weeks.
6. After two weeks, strain the tincture using a cheesecloth or fine mesh strainer.
7. Pour the strained liquid into dark glass dropper bottles using a funnel.
8. Dosage: 1-2 dropperfuls under the tongue or in water, up to 3 times daily

Mystic Moonlight: A Soothing Herbal Tincture for Restful Sleep

Calming Sleep Aid

Chamomile in the Mystic Moonlight tincture is renowned for its gentle sedative properties, easing the mind into a peaceful state, ideal for restful sleep. Lavender complements this by reducing anxiety and promoting relaxation, while Lemon Balm adds a soothing effect, mitigating restlessness. This harmonious blend of herbs works synergistically to calm the nervous system, making it an effective natural aid for those seeking a tranquil night's sleep.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh Chamomile flowers
- 1 cup fresh Lavender flowers
- 1 cup fresh Lemon Balm leaves
- 40% or higher Alcohol (vodka or brandy are suitable options), enough to cover the herbs
- 1 glass jar with a tight lid
- Dark glass dropper bottles for storage

Instructions:

1. Use fresh herbs for optimal results. If using dried herbs, use half the specified amount.
2. Chop or bruise the herbs to enhance the extraction of their properties.
3. Place the herbs in a glass jar and pour alcohol over the herbs, making sure they are fully submerged.
4. Secure the jar lid tightly and shake vigorously.
5. Keep the jar in a cool, dark place, shaking it daily for two weeks.
6. After two weeks, strain the tincture using a cheesecloth or fine mesh strainer.
7. Pour the strained liquid into dark glass dropper bottles using a funnel.
8. Dosage: 1-2 dropperfuls under the tongue or in water before bedtime.

Emerald Resilience: A Revitalizing Herbal Tincture for Immune Support

Immune Boosting Blend

Echinacea flowers boost the immune system by stimulating white blood cell production, critical for fighting off infections. Astragalus root enhances this effect by increasing the body's production of immune cells, while Elderberries contribute with their high antioxidant content, working together in synergy to provide a robust immune defense.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh Echinacea flowers
- 1 cup fresh Astragalus root
- 1 cup fresh Elderberries
- 40% or higher Alcohol (vodka or brandy are excellent options), enough to cover the herbs
- 1 glass jar with a tight lid
- Dark glass dropper bottles for storage

Instructions:

1. While fresh herbs are recommended, if dried herbs are your only option, use half the specified amount.
2. Chop or bruise the herbs to enhance the extraction of their properties.
3. Place the herbs in a glass jar and pour alcohol over the herbs, making sure they are fully submerged.
4. Securely fasten the lid on your jar and give it a good shake.
5. Keep the jar in a cool, dark place, shaking it daily for two weeks.
6. After two weeks, strain the tincture using a cheesecloth or fine mesh strainer.
7. Pour the strained liquid into dark glass dropper bottles using a funnel.
8. Dosage: 1-2 dropperfuls under the tongue or in water up to three times per day.

Mystical Moonlit Chamomile Tea: A Tranquil Night's Elixir

Relaxing Herbal Sleep Tea

Chamomile flowers are renowned for their calming properties, aiding in relaxation and promoting restful sleep. Lavender complements chamomile with its soothing aroma, known to reduce stress and anxiety. Lemon balm adds a gentle sedative effect, enhancing the tranquil qualities of the tea, while the raw honey and lemon juice contribute not just flavor but also a comforting warmth and mild antibacterial benefits, creating a harmonious blend for a peaceful night.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of dried chamomile flowers
- 1 tablespoon of dried lavender flowers
- 1 tablespoon of dried lemon balm
- 1 tablespoon of raw honey
- 1 teaspoon of freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 4 cups of water

A cup of chamomile tea

Instructions:

1. Bring 4 cups of water to a boil in a pot or kettle. The water should be hot but not scorching to prevent damaging the medicinal properties of the herbs.
2. Once the water is boiled, pour it into a teapot or a heat-resistant glass jar and add the dried herbs.
3. Cover the teapot or jar and let the herbs steep for about 10-15 minutes.
4. Strain the tea into a cup or a mug.
5. Add a tablespoon of raw honey and a teaspoon of freshly squeezed lemon juice to your tea. Honey is not only a natural sweetener, but also offers antimicrobial benefits. Lemon juice adds a tangy flavor and vitamin C.
6. Stir and enjoy.

Healing Harmony Herbal Tea Blend

Soothing Digestive Herbal Tea

Chamomile in this blend works as a gentle relaxant, aiding in reducing stress and soothing the digestive system. Peppermint leaves offer a refreshing flavor and are known for their ability to ease indigestion and relieve irritable bowel symptoms. Lemongrass adds a citrusy note and supports digestion, while lavender and rose petals bring a floral aroma, contributing to the overall calming effect. Together, these herbs create a synergistic blend that not only pleases the palate but also promotes digestive wellness.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of dried chamomile flowers
- 1 tablespoon of dried peppermint leaves
- 1 tablespoon of dried lemongrass
- 1 teaspoon of dried lavender flowers
- 1 teaspoon of dried rose petals
- Honey or a sweetener of your choice to taste (optional)

Instructions:

1. Mix all the dried ingredients in a bowl until they're well combined.
2. To make a cup of tea, use a tea infuser or a teabag to steep 1 tablespoon of the tea blend in 8 ounces of hot (not boiling) water for about 5-7 minutes, depending on how strong you want your tea.
3. Remove the infuser or tea bag and add honey or your preferred sweetener, if desired.
4. Store your herbal tea blend in an airtight container, preferably in a cool, dark place to maintain freshness.

Spiced Serenity Herbal Tea Blend

Soothes Digestion, Boosts Immunity, and Calms Mind

Rooibos leaves, naturally caffeine-free, promote relaxation and support immune health. Cinnamon and ginger synergize to aid digestion and provide anti-inflammatory benefits, while orange peel adds a calming citrus aroma and licorice root sweetens the blend, enhancing overall wellness and mood.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of dried rooibos leaves
- 1 tablespoon of dried cinnamon chips
- 1 tablespoon of dried ginger root
- 1 tablespoon of dried orange peel
- 1 teaspoon of dried licorice root
- Honey or a sweetener of your choice to taste (optional)

Instructions:

1. Mix all the dried ingredients in a bowl until they're well combined.
2. Transfer the tea blend to an airtight container and store it in a cool, dark place to maintain its freshness and potency.
3. For a cup of tea, steep 1 tablespoon of the tea blend in 8 ounces of hot water for about 5-7 minutes.
4. Remove the infuser or tea bag and add honey or your preferred sweetener, if desired.
5. Enjoy your tea in the morning for a caffeine-free pick-me-up or in the evening for a calming bedtime ritual.

Tranquil Tropics Herbal Tea Blend

Relieves Stress, Enhances Mood, and Supports Digestive Health

Hibiscus flowers, known for their stress-relieving properties, blend harmoniously with lemon balm leaves to enhance mood and promote relaxation. Pineapple chunks add a tropical twist that supports digestion, while coconut flakes offer a soothing aroma and rose hips contribute vitamin C, together creating a harmonious blend for mental and digestive wellness.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of dried hibiscus flowers
- 1 tablespoon of dried lemon balm leaves
- 1 tablespoon of dried pineapple chunks
- 1 teaspoon of dried coconut flakes
- 1 teaspoon of dried rose hips
- Honey or your preferred sweetener to taste (optional)

Instructions:

1. Combine all dried ingredients in a bowl until they're evenly distributed.
2. Store the tea blend in an airtight container, keeping it in a cool, dark location to preserve freshness.
3. To brew a cup of tea, steep 1 tablespoon of the tea blend in 8 ounces of hot water for 5-7 minutes, depending on personal taste preferences.
4. Remove the infuser or tea bag and add honey or your preferred sweetener, if desired.
5. Savor your Tranquil Tropics Herbal Tea at any time for a calming, tropical experience.

Dried and fresh hibiscus flower

Soothing Whisper Herbal Balm

Calms Skin Irritations and Promotes Relaxation

Olive oil, rich in vitamins and antioxidants, serves as a nourishing base, enhancing skin health. Beeswax forms a protective barrier, locking in moisture. Shea butter, a natural emollient, soothes and conditions the skin. The synergy of lavender, calendula, and chamomile flowers, known for their calming and anti-inflammatory properties, alleviates skin irritations and promotes relaxation. Lavender essential oil enhances the soothing effect, while tea tree and peppermint essential oils offer additional antiseptic and cooling benefits, making this balm ideal for minor skin irritations and relaxation.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of Olive Oil
- 2 tablespoons of Beeswax pellets
- 1 tablespoon of Shea Butter
- 1/4 cup of dried Lavender flowers
- 1/4 cup of dried Calendula flowers
- 1/4 cup of dried Chamomile flowers
- 10 drops of Lavender Essential Oil
- 5 drops of Tea Tree Essential Oil
- 5 drops of Peppermint Essential Oil

Instructions:

1. Combine the olive oil and dried herbs in a glass jar.
2. Set up a double boiler by placing a small saucepan with about 2 inches of water on medium heat. Place the jar in the saucepan. Let it simmer for about 2 hours.
3. After 2 hours, remove the jar from the heat. Strain the oil through a cheesecloth or fine mesh strainer into another clean jar, making sure to squeeze out as much oil as possible.
4. Put the infused oil back into the cleaned double boiler. Add the beeswax and shea butter. Stir until everything is completely melted and combined.
5. Remove the mixture from heat and let it cool for a couple of minutes. Then, add the essential oils and stir well.

6. Pour the mixture into small tins or jars while it is still liquid. Allow it to cool and solidify completely before closing the containers.

Olive oil

Revive and Restore Herbal Salve

Heals Dry Skin and Soothes Muscle Aches

Coconut oil, with its deep moisturizing properties, forms the base of this salve, rejuvenating dry skin. Shea butter complements this by providing intense hydration and reducing inflammation. Beeswax seals in moisture, creating a protective layer. Calendula petals, renowned for their skin-healing properties, work synergistically with comfrey and plantain leaves, known for their ability to soothe muscle aches and skin irritations. St. John's Wort flowers add a calming effect. The blend of eucalyptus, rosemary, and frankincense essential oils not only imparts a refreshing aroma but also offers anti-inflammatory and analgesic qualities, enhancing the salve's effectiveness in soothing muscle aches and revitalizing the skin.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of Coconut Oil
- 1/4 cup of Shea Butter
- 2 tablespoons of Beeswax pellets
- 1 tablespoon of Calendula petals
- 1 tablespoon of Comfrey leaf
- 1 tablespoon of Plantain leaf
- 1 tablespoon of St. John's Wort flowers
- 10 drops of Eucalyptus Essential Oil
- 5 drops of Rosemary Essential Oil
- 5 drops of Frankincense Essential Oil

Instructions:

1. In a double boiler, melt the coconut oil, shea butter, and beeswax pellets over low heat until fully melted and combined.
2. Add the herbs to the mixture. Stir well to ensure the herbs are evenly distributed.
3. Allow the mixture to simmer on low heat for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. After 30 minutes, remove the mixture from heat and let it cool slightly. Add the essential oils and stir well.
5. Pour the mixture into clean, sterilized jars or tins while it is still liquid. Allow it to cool and solidify completely before sealing the containers

Healing Harmony Herbal Balm

Balances Mood, Soothes Skin, and Promotes Relaxation

Arnica flowers in this balm offer anti-inflammatory properties, ideal for soothing skin irritations and muscle aches. The blend of chamomile and calendula petals, both known for their calming and healing effects on the skin, works synergistically with lavender, which promotes relaxation and stress relief. The inclusion of geranium and ylang-ylang essential oils enhances the balm's mood-balancing benefits, making it a comprehensive solution for both physical and emotional well-being.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 2 tablespoons of Cocoa Butter
- 2 tablespoons of Coconut Oil
- 1 tablespoon of Beeswax pellets
- 1 tablespoon of Arnica flowers
- 1 tablespoon of Chamomile flowers
- 1 tablespoon of Calendula petals
- 1 tablespoon of Lavender flowers
- 10 drops of Lavender Essential Oil
- 5 drops of Geranium Essential Oil
- 5 drops of Ylang Ylang Essential Oil

Ylang-ylang essential oil and flower

Instructions:

1. In a double boiler, melt the olive oil, cocoa butter, coconut oil, and beeswax pellets over low heat until fully melted and combined.
2. Add the herbs to the mixture. Stir well to ensure the herbs are evenly distributed.
3. Allow the mixture to simmer on low heat for approximately 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
4. After 1 hour, remove the mixture from heat and let it cool slightly. Add the essential oils and stir well.
5. Pour the mixture into clean, sterilized jars or tins while it is still liquid. Allow it to cool and solidify completely before sealing the containers.

Tranquil Blend Herbal Infusion

Promotes Restful Sleep and Relaxation

The Tranquil Blend Herbal Infusion combines chamomile and lavender, both renowned for their natural sedative properties, to promote relaxation and aid in achieving restful sleep. Lemon balm and passionflower contribute to this calming effect, with lemon balm known for its ability to ease restlessness and anxiety, and passionflower traditionally used to alleviate insomnia. The addition of rose petals not only imparts a delicate flavor but also enhances the soothing experience, creating a holistic remedy for unwinding and preparing for a peaceful night's sleep.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon dried chamomile flowers
- 1 tablespoon dried lavender blossoms
- 1 tablespoon dried lemon balm leaves
- 1 teaspoon dried passionflower leaves
- 1 teaspoon dried rose petals
- 4 cups filtered water
- Honey or sweetener of choice (optional)

Instructions:

1. In a teapot or a heatproof container, combine the chamomile flowers, lavender blossoms, lemon balm leaves, passionflower leaves, and rose petals.
2. Boil the filtered water and pour it over the herbal mixture. Cover the container and let it steep for 10-15 minutes.
3. Strain the infusion into teacups or a serving pot and add honey or your preferred sweetener, if desired.

Herbal infusion with dried rose petals

Vitality Boost: Energizing Herbal Fusion

Energizes and Enhances Well-Being

Ginseng root, the star ingredient in the Vitality Boost, is celebrated for its energy-enhancing properties and its potential to improve mental clarity and physical endurance. Hibiscus flowers contribute not only a tart flavor but also contain antioxidants that support overall well-being. Nettle leaves, rich in vitamins and minerals, act as a natural energizer without the jittery side effects of caffeine. Peppermint leaves add a refreshing note while aiding digestion, and rosehip, high in vitamin C, supports immune health. This fusion creates a synergistic blend that revitalizes the body and uplifts the spirit, making it an ideal choice for a natural energy boost.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon dried ginseng root
- 1 tablespoon dried hibiscus flowers
- 1 tablespoon dried nettle leaves
- 1 teaspoon dried peppermint leaves
- 1 teaspoon dried rosehip
- 4 cups filtered water
- Lemon slices or honey (optional)

Instructions:

1. In a teapot or heatproof container, combine the dried ginseng root, hibiscus flowers, nettle leaves, peppermint leaves, and rosehip.
2. Boil the filtered water and pour it over the herbal mixture. Cover the container and let it steep for 10-15 minutes.
3. Strain the infusion into teacups or a serving pot and add a squeeze of lemon juice or a drizzle of honey, if desired

Additional Tips:

- Citrus Zest: For an extra burst of citrus flavor, add a few strips of dried orange peel to the herbal mixture before steeping.
- Iced Refreshment: During hot summer days or for a refreshing twist, turn this fusion into an iced beverage. Follow the steeping

instructions, then let it cool and refrigerate. Serve over ice with a sprig of fresh mint or a slice of orange.

- Herbal Blend Variations: Feel free to customize the recipe by incorporating other energizing herbs such as yerba mate, lemongrass, or ginger. Adjust the quantities based on your preference and the potency of the herbs.

Herbal Skin-Soother Salve

Nourishes and Calms Skin

Calendula, renowned for its anti-inflammatory and wound-healing properties, forms the heart of this salve, aiding in skin repair and soothing irritation. Chamomile and lavender, both celebrated for their calming effects, work synergistically to reduce skin inflammation and promote relaxation, while plantain leaves offer natural antibacterial benefits, and comfrey leaves support skin regeneration.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup dried calendula flowers
- 1/4 cup dried chamomile flowers
- 1/4 cup dried lavender flowers
- 1/4 cup dried plantain leaves
- 1/4 cup dried comfrey leaves
- 1 cup carrier oil (such as olive oil or coconut oil)
- 2 tablespoons beeswax pellets
- Optional: 10 drops of essential oil (such as lavender or tea tree)

Instructions:

1. In a double boiler or a heatproof bowl placed over a pot of simmering water, combine all the herbs with the carrier oil.
2. Gently heat the mixture over low heat for 1-2 hours, stirring occasionally.
3. After the herbal mixture has infused, strain it through a fine-mesh sieve or cheesecloth, pressing to extract all the infused oil.
4. Return the infused oil to the double boiler or a clean heatproof bowl, and add the beeswax pellets. Heat over low heat until the beeswax melts completely, stirring to combine.
5. If desired, add 10 drops of essential oil for added fragrance and benefits. Stir well.
6. Carefully pour the salve mixture into small jars or tins, and let them cool completely before sealing.
7. Apply the Herbal Skin Soother Salve topically as needed to soothe and nourish dry, irritated, or damaged skin.

Muscle Relief Salve

Soothes Muscle and Joint Discomfort

Arnica flowers in this Muscle Relief Salve are known for their anti-inflammatory properties, aiding in the reduction of muscle soreness and bruising. Cayenne pepper adds heat and increases circulation, enhancing the soothing effect, while ginger root contributes its pain-relieving qualities. St. John's wort and comfrey leaves synergize to support nerve health and accelerate tissue repair, making this combination especially effective for muscle and joint discomfort.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup dried arnica flowers
- 1/4 cup dried cayenne pepper
- 1/4 cup dried ginger root
- 1/4 cup dried St. John's wort
- 1/4 cup dried comfrey leaves
- 1 cup carrier oil (such as almond oil or grapeseed oil)
- 2 tablespoons beeswax pellets
- Optional: 10 drops of essential oil (such as peppermint or eucalyptus)

Instructions:

1. In a double boiler or a heatproof bowl placed over a pot of simmering water, combine the dried herbs with the carrier oil.
2. Gently heat the mixture over low heat for 1-2 hours, stirring occasionally.
3. After the herbal mixture has infused, strain it through a fine-mesh sieve or cheesecloth, pressing to extract all the infused oil.
4. Return the infused oil to the double boiler or a clean heatproof bowl, and add the beeswax pellets. Heat over low heat until the beeswax melts completely, stirring to combine.
5. If desired, add 10 drops of essential oil for a pleasant aroma and additional benefits. Stir well.
6. Carefully pour the salve mixture into small jars or tins, and let them cool completely before sealing.
7. Apply the Herbal Muscle Relief Salve topically to areas of sore muscles or joints, massaging gently for relief.

Feel free to add other herbs known for their muscle-soothing properties, such as lavender flowers, rosemary leaves, or menthol crystals. You can also incorporate a few drops of arnica or wintergreen essential oil for an added boost.

Respiratory Relief Rub: Breathe Easy Salve

Enhances Respiratory Comfort and Clarity

Eucalyptus and peppermint in this Respiratory Relief Rub offer potent decongestant properties, helping to clear airways and enhance breathing. Thyme and rosemary contribute antiseptic qualities, which can aid in fighting respiratory infections, while chamomile soothes and reduces inflammation, providing overall respiratory comfort and clarity. This blend creates a synergistic effect, amplifying the respiratory benefits beyond what each herb could achieve alone.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup dried eucalyptus leaves
- 1/4 cup dried peppermint leaves
- 1/4 cup dried thyme leaves
- 1/4 cup dried rosemary leaves
- 1/4 cup dried chamomile flowers
- 1 cup coconut oil
- 2 tablespoons beeswax pellets
- Optional: 10 drops of eucalyptus essential oil

Instructions:

1. In a double boiler or a heatproof bowl placed over a pot of simmering water, combine the dried eucalyptus leaves, peppermint leaves, thyme leaves, rosemary leaves, and chamomile flowers with the coconut oil.
2. Gently heat the mixture over low heat for 1-2 hours, stirring occasionally. This process allows the oil to become infused with the respiratory-soothing properties of the herbs.
3. After the herbal mixture has infused, strain it through a fine-mesh sieve or cheesecloth, pressing to extract all the infused oil. Discard the herbs.
4. Return the infused oil to the double boiler or a clean heatproof bowl, and add the beeswax pellets. Heat over low heat until they melt completely, stirring to combine.
5. If desired, add 10 drops of eucalyptus essential oil for an invigorating aroma and added benefits. Stir well.
6. Carefully pour the salve mixture into small jars or tins, and let them cool completely before sealing.
7. Apply the herbal Respiratory Relief Rub to the chest, back, and throat area as needed for soothing and supporting respiratory comfort.

Lemon balm salve

Historical Recipes

In the following pages, we journey back through time to explore a treasure trove of historical remedies that have stood the test of centuries. These ancient recipes are more than just instructions for natural healing; they are a window into the wisdom of our ancestors, blending herbs, spices, and natural elements in ways that have been revered and passed down through generations. While modern science offers us advanced insights, these historical remedies remind us of the enduring power and simplicity of nature's own medicine cabinet. As we delve into these age-old concoctions, we invite you to embrace the rich heritage and timeless traditions that have contributed profoundly to the world of herbal healing.

Egyptian Kyphi

Egyptian Kyphi (or "kapet") is a renowned ancient Egyptian incense and perfume with both religious and medicinal uses, making it one of the world's oldest fragrances. Religiously, it was offered to gods, notably the sun god Ra, during evening rituals, assisting the sun's journey into the underworld and its subsequent rebirth. Temples, especially those of Isis, burned kyphi at sunset for this purpose.

Medically, kyphi was valued for its therapeutic effects, such as easing anxieties, promoting sleep, and treating asthma and respiratory issues; it was even taken with wine as a remedy. Its composition, as indicated by ancient texts like those from the Edfu temple and medical papyri, typically comprised raisins, wine, honey, myrrh, frankincense, cedar, juniper, and assorted herbs and resins. However, the exact formula varied across temples and periods.

Ingredients:

- ½ cup raisins
- 1 cup wine (or enough to cover the raisins)
- 1 tbsp honey
- 8 tbsp ground myrrh
- 8 tbsp ground frankincense
- 4 tsp dried & ground juniper berries
- 4 tsp dried & ground cyperus
- 4 tsp dried & ground calamus root

Instructions:

1. Soak raisins in wine overnight.
2. Grind juniper berries, cyperus, and calamus into a fine powder.
3. Mix the soaked raisins, ground herbs, honey, frankincense, and myrrh to create a thick paste.
4. Shape into small balls and let dry.
5. Burn as incense.

Properties:

- Raisins: Historically believed to provide a base and sweetness.
- Wine: A natural preservative and solvent.
- Honey: Antimicrobial properties, sweetener.
- Myrrh: Used for its aromatic properties and believed to be purifying.
- Juniper berries: Thought to have cleansing and protective qualities.
- Cyperus: Ancient texts suggest it was used for its soothing properties.
- Calamus: Used for its aromatic and calming qualities.

Incense burning in a censer

Hippocras

Hippocras (or hypocras) is a spiced wine that was popular in medieval Europe. The method for infusing wine with herbs using a special cloth filter, called “Hippocratic sleeve” or “Hippocratic bag”, is associated with Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine. The Hippocratic sleeve is a conical cloth bag that filters out solid ingredients from the wine, leaving a beverage believed to have medicinal properties. The Greeks, like many ancient cultures, thought that by infusing wine with certain herbs, they could achieve specific therapeutic benefits, ranging from digestion aid to antiseptic qualities.

Although the technique existed before Hippocrates, it became linked to his name due to his writings that emphasized the significance of herbal wines and the need to filter them. Hippocrates often recommended wine-based remedies for various health issues. Historically, beyond the Greeks, many cultures used wine to extract medicinal compounds from plants, underscoring its importance not just as a drink, but also in medicine, religion, and daily life. Historical recipes for hippocras often vary depending on the source and region, but most have a common base of wine, sugar, and spices.

Ingredients:

- 1 750ml-bottle of red or white wine
- ½ to 1 cup of sugar – you can adjust this to taste; some recipes also use honey
- 2-3 cinnamon sticks
- 1 small piece of ginger, sliced or 1 teaspoon of ground ginger
- 2-3 whole cloves
- 1-2 teaspoons of freshly ground long pepper (you can substitute with black pepper if you can’t find long pepper)
- ¼ tsp of ground grains of paradise (optional)
- A pinch of mace (or nutmeg)
- A pinch of cardamom

Instructions:

1. If you’re using whole spices, lightly crush them in a mortar and pestle to release their flavor.
2. In a large bowl or container, combine the wine, sugar, and all the spices. Stir well to ensure the sugar is dissolved.

Mixture of wine, sugar, and all spices in a large container

3. Allow the mixture to sit and infuse for several hours to overnight. The longer it infuses, the more the flavors will meld.
4. Once infused, strain the mixture through a fine sieve or cheesecloth (this is reminiscent of the “Hippocratic sleeve” used in historical times). This will remove all the solid spice pieces, leaving you with a clear, spiced wine.
5. Hippocras can be served at room temperature or slightly chilled, depending on personal preference. It’s often enjoyed as an after-dinner drink.
6. If you don’t plan on drinking the entire batch immediately, transfer the strained hippocras to a clean bottle and seal. Store in a cool, dark place. It should keep well for a few weeks.

The Ancient Roots of Chinese Tea and Ginseng

Tea and ginseng have been integral components of traditional Chinese health and wellness practices for millennia. “The Classic of Tea” written during the Tang dynasty by Lu Yu, elaborates on the art and significance of tea preparation and consumption. Ginseng’s therapeutic properties have been documented in ancient pharmacopeias such as the “Shennong Bencaojing” which dates back to the Han dynasty. While green tea’s introduction is often attributed to the legendary Emperor Shen Nong around 2737 BCE, ginseng has been celebrated for over 2,000 years in Chinese writings for its rejuvenating and revitalizing qualities. Drawing from these ancient sources, the following recipes encapsulate the rich history and empirical knowledge of traditional Chinese beverages:

Ancient Chinese Green Tea Remedy

Green tea: In traditional Chinese medicine, green tea is considered to have “cooling” properties, which means it can help balance the “heat” in the body. Heat, in TCM, is often associated with symptoms like inflammation, fever, and skin eruptions.

Preparation: The ancient Chinese method of preparing green tea emphasizes the water’s temperature (usually below boiling to preserve the tea’s delicate flavors) and the steeping time.

Ingredients:

- Green tea leaves
- Boiling water

Instructions:

1. Place green tea leaves in a cup.
2. Pour boiling water over the leaves.
3. Let steep for a few minutes.
4. Strain and drink.

Traditional Chinese Ginseng Tea

Ginseng: Revered in traditional Chinese medicine for its rejuvenating properties. It’s believed to boost energy, lower blood sugar and cholesterol levels, reduce stress, and promote relaxation.

Synergy: Brewing ginseng releases its active compounds, making it easier for the body to absorb.

Ingredients:

- 3-4 slices of dried ginseng root
- 1 cup of water

Instructions:

1. Add the ginseng slices to a pot.
2. Pour in the water.
3. Bring to a simmer and let it simmer for 20 minutes.
4. Strain the tea into a cup and drink.

Steeping green tea leaves in a tea cup

Four Gentlemen Decoction

The Four Gentlemen Decoction, known as "Si Jun Zi Tang" in Chinese, is a classic formula in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). It is primarily used to enhance the Qi (energy) of the spleen and stomach, which in TCM theory are responsible for digestion and absorption of nutrients, as well as the transformation of food into Qi and blood. This makes it beneficial for symptoms related to spleen Qi deficiency, such as fatigue, weakness, poor appetite, loose stools, abdominal bloating, and pale face.

Caution: Some people may experience digestive discomfort or other side effects from Si Jun Zi Tang. If this happens, discontinue use and consult with your TCM practitioner. It's crucial to adjust the dosage and formulation based on individual needs.

Ingredients:

- Ren Shen (Panax ginseng): Often simply referred to as Ginseng, this herb is a powerful Qi tonic. It's renowned for its ability to strengthen the Qi of both the spleen and lung.
- Bai Zhu (Atractylodes macrocephala rhizome): This herb is used to invigorate the spleen and dry dampness. In TCM, dampness is often viewed as a pathological factor that can hinder the spleen's functioning.
- Fu Ling (Poria cocos): Fu Ling is used to assist the spleen's function and drain dampness, thereby promoting diuresis (the production of urine).
- Zhi Gan Cao (Glycyrrhiza uralensis, prepared licorice root): Zhi Gan Cao tonifies the spleen and augments Qi. It also harmonizes the actions of the other herbs in the formula, reducing possible side effects.

Instructions:

1. Acquire high-quality, preferably organic, versions of the four herbs. These can usually be purchased from reputable TCM herbal shops or online suppliers.
2. Measure out the herbs according to your practitioner's advice. A common ratio might be:
    - Ren Shen: 9 grams
    - Bai Zhu: 9 grams
    - Fu Ling: 9 grams
    - Zhi Gan Cao: 6 grams
3. Rinse the herbs in cold water to remove any dust or residues.
4. Place the herbs in a pot with about 4-5 cups of water.
5. Bring the water to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 30-45 minutes.
6. Strain the liquid to separate the herbs.
7. Allow the decoction to cool slightly before drinking.
8. Consume warm, once or twice daily. The decoction can be stored in the refrigerator for a few days. Reheat before consumption but avoid boiling it again.

Chinese herbal medicine has a rich history dating back thousands of years.

Turmeric Golden Milk

"Turmeric Golden Milk," also known as "Golden Milk" or "Haldi ka Doodh" in Hindi, is a traditional drink rooted in Ayurveda, an ancient Indian medical system. Ayurveda emphasizes balancing body energies for health and wellness. Golden Milk, a staple from this tradition, primarily contains turmeric, celebrated in Ayurveda for its anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and digestive benefits. The drink's basic recipe combines turmeric powder with milk and occasionally black pepper, which contains piperine that boosts the absorption of turmeric's main compound, curcumin. Variations now include spices like ginger, cardamom, and cinnamon.

Turmeric golden milk with cinnamon

Traditionally consumed in India as a remedy for colds, coughs, and joint pains, its global popularity has recently surged due to increased interest in natural remedies and turmeric's health properties. Today, it's globally recognized as a wellness beverage and is sometimes consumed as a caffeine-free alternative to tea or coffee.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups milk (Traditionally cow's milk, but you can use other milk alternatives)
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder (or freshly ground or grated turmeric root)
- A pinch of black pepper
- Ginger: a small piece, thinly sliced or grated (optional)
- 1-2 cardamom pods, crushed (optional)
- Honey to taste (optional)
- 1 teaspoon ghee or coconut oil (optional)

Instructions:

1. If you're using fresh turmeric, peel and grate or finely slice it. Similarly, if using fresh ginger, peel and slice or grate it.
2. In a saucepan, add the milk and bring it to a low boil.
3. Once the milk is boiling, reduce the heat and stir in the turmeric powder (or fresh turmeric). Ensure it's well-mixed.
4. Add the sliced or grated ginger, crushed cardamom pods, and a pinch of black pepper to the milk. If you're using ghee or coconut oil, you can add it at this point too.
5. Allow the mixture to simmer on low heat for about 5-10 minutes, ensuring it doesn't boil over. This helps in infusing the flavors and properties of the spices into the milk.
6. Turn off the heat and strain the milk to remove the solids. Pour the strained milk into a cup.
7. If you wish, you can sweeten the golden milk with honey. Stir well until it dissolves and drink warm.

Ancient Indian Neem Mouthwash

Before the advent of modern toothbrushes, many rural parts of India used neem twigs as a natural toothbrush. These twigs were frayed at one end to form bristles, and people would chew on them and use the frayed end to brush their teeth. This not only helped in cleaning the teeth but the natural properties of neem also assisted in fighting tooth decay, reducing gum inflammation, and preventing bacterial infections.

A traditional Neem mouthwash can be made by boiling neem leaves. Here's a simple recipe:

1. Take a handful of fresh neem leaves. Wash them thoroughly.
2. Boil these leaves in about 2 cups of water until the water turns green and absorbs the essence of the leaves.
3. Allow the mixture to cool down.
4. Strain the water and discard the leaves.
5. To this strained water, you can add a teaspoon of honey or any natural sweetener if you wish to reduce its bitterness.
6. You can also add a few drops of peppermint or spearmint essential oil to enhance the flavor.
7. To use, swish the mouthwash around in your mouth for about a minute, then spit it out. Do not swallow the mouthwash.

Benefits of Neem Mouthwash:

- Antibacterial: Neem has antibacterial properties that can help reduce the bacteria that cause cavities, gum inflammation, and bad breath.
- Anti-inflammatory: It can help reduce gum inflammation.
- Antifungal: Neem can combat the fungus that leads to oral thrush.
- Refreshing: Neem can leave the mouth feeling refreshed and reduce bad breath.

Mayan Cacao Elixir

The ancient Mayans held cacao (the raw form of chocolate) in high regard, not only for its delightful flavor but also for its spiritual and medicinal properties. The cacao bean was a significant part of Mayan culture, economy, and rituals. The Mayans were among the first civilizations to cultivate the cacao tree and recognize the potential of its beans.

The traditional Mayan cacao drink was much different from the sweet hot chocolate we're familiar with today. It was a rich, frothy beverage often made with spices. Here's a basic recipe based on historical records:

Ingredients:

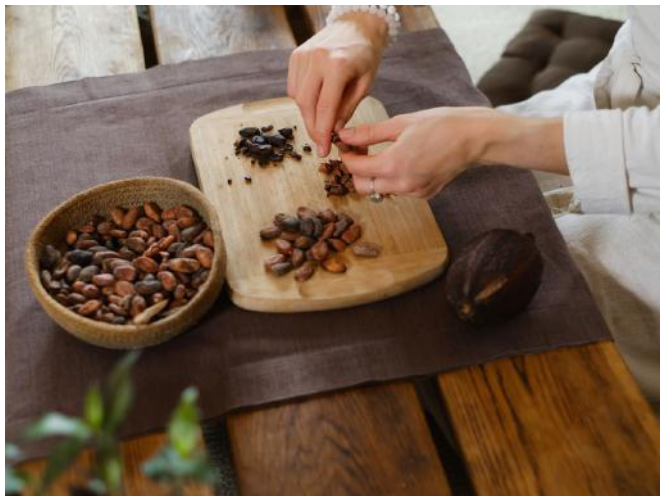
- Raw cacao beans (or cacao powder if beans are not available)
- Water
- Chili powder (traditionally, a native variety of chili was used)
- Honey or agave syrup (for sweetness, though traditionally it might not have always been sweetened)
- Optional: Other spices like vanilla, allspice, or annatto.

Instructions:

1. If you're starting with cacao beans, roast them lightly. After roasting, remove the shells and grind the beans into a paste or powder.
2. Mix the cacao powder with water to create a rich, chocolaty liquid.
3. Spice it up with a pinch of chili powder and other optional spices. The amount of chili used varies according to taste, but traditionally, the drink had a spicy kick.
4. Sweeten the drink with honey or agave syrup if desired. Remember that the Mayans may not have always had access to sweeteners, so the drink might often have been more bitter than what most modern palates are used to.
5. Once everything is combined, froth the mixture. The Mayans would pour the drink back and forth from a height between two vessels to create a frothy top.

Significance:

- Ceremonial Use: Cacao drinks played a role in Mayan rituals and ceremonies. They believed cacao had divine origins, associating it with their gods, especially the Maize god.
- Medicinal Use: The Mayans believed cacao had health benefits. They might have consumed it for stamina, to alleviate fatigue, and even for improving digestion.
- Trade and Economy: Cacao beans were so valuable in the Mayan civilization that they were sometimes used as a form of currency.



Peeling roasted cacao beans

Ancient Mayan Achiote Balm

The ancient Mayans believed in the healing properties of various plants, and achiote was no exception. They used it to treat various ailments. Specifically, the achiote balm was believed to have therapeutic properties. It was used topically to treat skin issues, minor cuts, and burns. Some also believe it provided relief from sunburn and insect bites.

Beyond its practical uses, achiote held spiritual significance for the Mayans. The red dye derived from achiote seeds was sometimes associated with blood, which had powerful ritual and symbolic meanings in Mayan culture.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon achiote (annatto) seeds
- 1 cup animal fat (like lard)

Instructions:

1. In a pot, melt the animal fat over low heat.
2. Add the achiote seeds.
3. Allow the mixture to infuse on low heat for 1-2 hours. The fat should become a deep red color.
4. Strain the seeds out and pour the liquid balm into a container.
5. Let it cool and solidify before using.
6. Use topically for skin irritations.

Properties:

- Achiote (annatto) seeds: Contains bixin, which is known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.
- Animal fat (like lard): Acts as a carrier for the active compounds in the seeds and provides a base for the balm.

Synergy:

- The fat aids in the extraction of the active compounds from the seeds, allowing for better skin absorption.

Native American Slippery Elm Cough Syrup

The Native American tribes, particularly the Iroquois and the Ojibwa, are known to have utilized slippery elm's inner bark for various medicinal applications. Apart from coughs, the inner bark was also used to treat sore throats, digestive problems, wounds, and skin conditions. Its mucilaginous property is soothing and can be particularly useful for the digestive and respiratory tracts.

The inner bark of slippery elm contains a substance called mucilage. When mixed with water, mucilage forms a slick gel that coats and soothes mucous membranes, such as the throat and stomach lining. This protective layer can alleviate symptoms like coughs and sore throats and promote healing.

Native Americans would sometimes mix the powdered bark with water to create a thick paste or concoction that could be ingested for coughs and respiratory ailments. With European colonization, settlers adopted and adapted some of these traditional remedies. As such, it's not unusual to find slippery elm as an ingredient in modern-day natural cough syrups or lozenges, often combined with other natural remedies.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons slippery elm bark
- 2 cups of water
- 1 cup honey

Instructions:

1. Add the slippery elm bark to a pot with the water.
2. Bring to a simmer and let it reduce by half.
3. Strain out the bark.
4. While still warm, mix in the honey until fully combined.
5. Let cool and store in a sealed jar.
6. Take a teaspoon as needed for coughs.

Properties:

- Slippery Elm: Its inner bark contains mucilage that can soothe sore throats and coughs.
- Honey: Soothing, antimicrobial, and acts as a natural sweetener.

Synergy:

- Combining honey with the mucilage from slippery elm provides a soothing effect on the throat while also offering antimicrobial properties.

Dried slippery elm bark

Ancient Roman Mustard Plaster

Ancient Roman medical writers like Pliny the Elder mentioned the medicinal properties of mustard seeds in their writings. They recognized mustard's warming and stimulating properties. Mustard seeds can increase circulation when applied topically, which can bring more blood to a congested area, hence its use for respiratory ailments.

The exact origins of the mustard plaster in Rome are murky, but the general concept of applying warming substances to the skin to draw out infections, stimulate blood flow, or relieve congestion is an old one. It's possible that someone recognized that the same warming properties of mustard seeds that made them good for ingestion might also be beneficial when applied to the skin.

Caution: The potency of mustard plasters means they can burn the skin if left on for too long or if made too strong. It's important to always use caution if trying out old remedies and to be aware of potential allergic reactions or sensitivities.

While the Ancient Romans were one of the many cultures to recognize the medicinal value of mustard, it's worth noting that mustard plasters and similar remedies were also found in other cultures, like traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda.

Ingredients:

- Mustard seeds
- Flour
- Water

Instructions:

1. Crush mustard seeds into a powder.
2. Mix with a bit of flour.
3. Slowly add water to create a paste.
4. Apply to the chest or affected area (use with caution as it can burn the skin).

Norse Yarrow Ale

The Norse had many rituals and beliefs tied to their ale and mead. Drinks were used in blóts (sacrificial rituals) and sumbels (a ritual toast). Given yarrow's association in other cultures with divination and the spirit world, it's intriguing to consider its potential ceremonial role in Norse rituals, though concrete evidence might be sparse.

Before the widespread use of hops in beer and ale, various herbs were used to add bitterness and flavor to the brews. It's possible that yarrow, with its bitter properties, could have been used in this context. Yarrow could also have been combined with other herbs to produce gruit, a mixture of botanicals used to flavor and preserve beer before the adoption of hops.

Like other cultures, the Norse likely recognized the medicinal properties of yarrow. It has been traditionally used for a variety of purposes, including as a wound treatment, for fevers, and for digestive issues.

Ingredients:

- Yarrow
- Brewing ingredients (like malt, water, etc.)

Instructions:

1. Brew ale as usual, incorporating yarrow into the process.
2. Allow to ferment.
3. Drink once ready.

Brewing yarrow ale

Avicenna's Rosewater

Avicenna, also known as Ibn Sina (980-1037 CE), was a Persian polymath who made significant contributions to various fields, including medicine, astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy. Among his most celebrated works is "The Canon of Medicine" (Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb), which served as a reference in both the West and the East for several centuries.

Avicenna refined the process of distilling rose water, enhancing its quality through steam distillation, where rose petals are boiled and the vapor is captured to produce rose water.

Preparing the fresh rose petals

Rose water has been utilized for centuries for its medicinal and cosmetic benefits, valued for its effects on the heart, spirit, and eyes. It is used as a skin toner, astringent, and fragrance. Its significance in Islamic culture extends beyond Avicenna's contributions, as it's associated with purity and spirituality, often being used in ceremonies and religious rituals.

Ingredients:

- Fresh rose petals (preferably from Rosa damascena)
- Distilled water

Equipment:

- Large pot with an upside-down lid
- Heat-resistant glass bowl
- Ice
- Heat source

Instructions:

1. Place the bowl inside the pot.
2. Surround the bowl with rose petals and cover them with distilled water.
3. Put the pot's lid on upside-down and start heating.
4. Place ice on the lid to aid condensation.
5. As water heats, steam captures essential oils from petals, condenses on the cold lid, and drips into the bowl.
6. After several hours, turn off heat and let it cool.
7. Collect the rosewater from the bowl, and store in sterilized containers in a cool, dark place.

Four Thieves Vinegar

The story originates from Europe during the time of the bubonic plague, which is colloquially known as the Black Death. The plague was responsible for the deaths of millions of people during the Middle Ages.

According to popular legend, there were four thieves in France who robbed the homes and bodies of the dead during the height of the plague. Despite their close contact with the infected, these thieves supposedly never contracted the disease. When they were eventually caught and brought to trial, the judge, curious and impressed by their immunity, offered them a deal: their secret in exchange for a lighter sentence. The thieves revealed that they were protected by a special concoction made of various herbs steeped in vinegar, which they applied to themselves before committing their crimes. This became known as "Four Thieves Vinegar."

While the exact recipe can vary, traditional ingredients often found in Four Thieves Vinegar include:

Ingredients:

- Apple cider vinegar
- Garlic cloves
- Wormwood
- Meadowsweet
- Juniper berries
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Lavender
- Thyme
- Mint

Instructions:

1. Fill a jar with equal parts of each dried herb.
2. Cover the herbs with apple cider vinegar.
3. Seal the jar and let it sit in a cool, dark place for 6 weeks.
4. Strain the mixture and use as a tonic.

Each herb, with its unique properties, has been highly valued for its strong antimicrobial characteristics. Garlic, in particular, stands out as a robust natural antibiotic. When these herbs are combined, they are not only believed to embody antiseptic and aromatic qualities but also exhibit a synergy that enhances their antimicrobial effects. Apart from these shared antimicrobial properties, each herb offers distinct benefits:

- Vinegar: Preservative, antimicrobial.
- Garlic: Immune-boosting, antimicrobial.
- Sage: Antioxidant, antimicrobial.
- Rosemary: Antioxidant, cognitive stimulant.
- Lavender: Calming, antiseptic.
- Thyme: Antimicrobial, antifungal.
- Mint: Analgesic, antimicrobial.

Herbs infused in apple cider vinegar

Middle Eastern Za'atar Blend

Za'atar is a classic Middle Eastern spice blend with ancient roots. Its name, "za'atar," is also used for a particular herb that belongs to the oregano-thyme family, which is often a key ingredient in the blend itself. The use of the za'atar herb can be traced back to ancient Egypt. There's evidence from ancient texts, including the Bible, that reference the use of a plant named "ezov" which many believe to be the hyssop plant or a close relative to modern-day za'atar.

In ancient times, za'atar was believed to have several health and spiritual benefits. It was thought to make the mind alert and the body strong. Students and scholars were often given bread dipped in olive oil and za'atar to boost their mental capacity.

While the exact blend can vary by region and even from family to family, the basic ingredients often remain the same. Here's a common recipe for making your own Za'atar blend:

Ingredients:

- Thyme: Dried and ground. Thyme gives the blend its primary flavor profile.
- Sesame Seeds: These are often toasted lightly to enhance their nutty flavor.
- Sumac: This provides a tangy, lemony touch to the blend. It's quite unique and is a defining component of Za'atar.
- Salt: To taste. Some blends may leave this out, but a touch of salt can help amplify the other flavors.

Instructions:

1. Mix together 2 tablespoons of dried thyme, 2 tablespoons of toasted sesame seeds, 2 tablespoons of ground sumac, and a half teaspoon of salt (adjust to your preference).
2. Store in an airtight container.
3. You can adjust the proportions to suit your taste. Some blends may also incorporate other ingredients like oregano, marjoram, or cumin, but the three mentioned above are the most common.

Digestive Bitters

Bitter herbs have been used in various cultures to support digestion by stimulating the production of digestive juices and enzymes. This digestive bitters elixir combines a variety of herbs with bitter, aromatic, and soothing properties to create a well-rounded remedy for supporting overall digestion. It's important to note that bitters elixirs are typically taken in small doses before or after meals to help enhance the digestive process. As always, consult a healthcare professional before adding new remedies to your routine, especially if you have underlying health conditions or are taking medications.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon dried dandelion root
- 1 tablespoon dried burdock root
- 1 tablespoon dried gentian root
- 1 tablespoon dried fennel seeds
- 1 tablespoon dried orange peel
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 teaspoon cardamom pods
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon chamomile flowers

Instructions:

1. Combine the dried dandelion root, burdock root, and gentian root in a glass jar.
2. Add the fennel seeds, orange peel, cinnamon stick, cardamom pods, coriander seeds, and chamomile flowers to the jar.
3. Fill the jar with enough alcohol, such as vodka or brandy, to cover the herbs completely.
4. Seal the jar tightly and shake well.
5. Store the jar in a cool, dark place for 4 to 6 weeks, shaking it gently every few days.
6. After the infusion period, strain the liquid through a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth into a clean bottle.
7. Label the bottle with the contents and date.

Properties:

- Dandelion, burdock, and gentian roots:

These bitter roots are known to stimulate digestive juices, promoting healthy digestion and appetite.

- Fennel seeds: Relieve gas, bloating, and stomach discomfort.
- Orange peel: Adds a pleasant citrus flavor and contains essential oils that aid digestion.
- Cinnamon stick: Used for its warming properties and potential to ease digestive discomfort.
- Cardamom pods: Help alleviate indigestion and improve gut health.
- Coriander seeds: Aid in digestion and help reduce gas and bloating.
- Chamomile flowers: Soothing to the digestive system and can help ease digestive upset.

Different herbs contain different medicinal properties

Mullein Ear Oil

Mullein has long been cherished for its medicinal properties. Dioscorides, a first-century Greek physician, mentioned the use of mullein for various ailments. Throughout history, various cultures have utilized it for respiratory and ear problems. This recipe is based on ancient traditions but enhanced with contemporary understanding.

Ingredients:

- Dried mullein flowers, preferably harvested at midday when the sun's energy is the strongest.
- Extra virgin olive oil, cold-pressed and organic. In ancient texts, olive oil was a valued medicinal carrier oil and was believed to have its own healing properties.
- Fresh garlic cloves (optional): Garlic has been historically recognized for its antibacterial and antiviral properties and can be beneficial for ear infections.

Instructions:

1. Fill about 1/4 of the jar with dried mullein flowers.
2. If using, add 1-2 finely chopped fresh garlic cloves.
3. Pour olive oil over the herbs until they are fully submerged. Ensure that there are no air bubbles.
4. Seal the jar tightly.
5. Place the jar in a warm, sunny spot for 3-4 weeks. The sunlight helps the mullein release its beneficial properties into the oil.
6. Shake the jar gently every day to help the infusion process.
7. After the infusion period, strain the oil through a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth into a clean bottle or jar, discarding the solid materials.
8. Store the strained oil in a cool, dark place.
9. When needed, use a few drops as ear drops. Ensure you always consult with a healthcare professional before applying any herbal preparations to sensitive areas.

Willow Bark Pain Relief

Ancient civilizations, including the Egyptians, Greeks, and Chinese, utilized willow bark for its therapeutic benefits. Known for its salicin content, a precursor to modern aspirin, willow bark has been historically acclaimed for its pain-relief and anti-inflammatory properties.

Ingredients:

- Fresh or dried willow bark: 1-2 tablespoons
- Water: 2 cups
- Optional: Honey or lemon to taste

Instructions:

1. Bring water to a boil in a pot.
2. If using fresh willow bark, peel it from the branches and chop it into small pieces. If using dried willow bark, break it into smaller pieces using a mortar and pestle.
3. Add willow bark pieces to the boiling water. Reduce the heat and allow it to simmer for 20-30 minutes.
4. Using a fine-mesh strainer or cloth, strain the brew to remove bark pieces. Pour the liquid into a cup.
5. Add a touch of honey or a squeeze of lemon to enhance the taste if desired.
6. Drink 1-2 cups a day as needed for pain relief. Ensure you do not exceed this dosage, as excessive intake might lead to unwanted side effects.

Medieval Wart Remedy

Basil's essential oils possess antiviral properties that have demonstrated effectiveness against the virus responsible for warts. Applying it directly ensures the wart comes into contact with basil's active compounds.

Ingredients:

- Fresh basil leaves

Instructions:

1. Crush fresh basil leaves in a mortar and pestle until a paste forms.
2. Apply the paste directly to warts.
3. Cover with a bandage or cloth to keep the mixture in place.
4. Leave on for several hours or overnight.
5. Repeat daily until the wart diminishes. Monitor the skin for any adverse reactions and discontinue use if irritation occurs.

Preparing fresh basil leaves

Roman Rose, Honey, and Almond Cleanser

The Romans prized both the beauty and medicinal properties of roses, using them in various aspects of daily life - from ceremonies to beauty regimens. Honey, known for its antibacterial properties, and almonds, rich in nourishing oils, were staples in ancient Roman skincare practices. This recipe helps to cleanse the skin and reduce blemishes.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup rosewater
- 1 tablespoon raw honey
- 1 tablespoon almond oil

Instructions:

1. Combine the rosewater, honey, and almond oil in a bowl.
2. Mix until smooth and fully combined.
3. Apply to the face with a soft cloth or fingers, using gentle circular motions.
4. Rinse off with warm water. Use this as a gentle cleanser in the evening.

Egyptian Aloe and Sesame Oil Lotion

Aloe was a popular ingredient in ancient Egyptian beauty and health recipes. It was believed to have skin-rejuvenating properties. Sesame oil was commonly used as a moisturizer.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons aloe vera gel (freshly extracted preferred)
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil

Instructions:

1. In a bowl, combine the aloe vera gel and sesame oil.
2. Whisk the mixture until well-blended and it achieves a lotion-like consistency.
3. Store in a clean jar or bottle. Use as a moisturizer after cleansing.

Extracting fresh aloe vera gel

Readers' Comments

We're thrilled to share some of the wonderful insights and experiences that you, our valued readers, have generously shared with us. While these personal accounts of herbal remedies are inspiring and informative, please note that they are not endorsements or medical advice. Always consult with a healthcare professional before trying any new remedy or health practice.

I drink turmeric and ginger tea every night, and it helps a lot with my arthritis.

- Grace, 61

I use rosemary, cloves, mint, a little tea tree and a little caster oil and my hair is going back to non gray .... Go figure I am 73.

-Aly

I use ginger, cayenne, turmeric in a tea every morning.

-Leonard

Tumeric, cinnamon, ginger, chia seed, flax seed, and local honey are good for you, but also very good to give to dogs. Just add a pinch for small dogs and 2 pinches for dogs over 50 lbs.

-Sue

I use the capsules made from the Mullein plant and I'm off my oxygen that I used to be on 24-7 for a lung disease.

-Linda

After a severe stroke, I started taking fresh garlic with crackers. It's been a big help in my recovery and overall health improvement.

– Delfin

I put turmeric and pepper in my morning oatmeal with cinnamon.

-Jennifer

We've been using an avocado seed in 2 cups alcohol as pain spray for a long time. Just put in blender on liquify and let sit three nights. Must be three nights. Then use in a spray bottle. Our friends told us about this years ago, and it works. Sounds crazy.

-Lynn

I've been using sage for headaches and during my menstrual cycle. Just breathing in the oil brings so much relief!

– Karen

I mix cinnamon oil in my green tea elixir every morning along with raw honey to sweeten and use tea with pomegranate and cranberry flavors. Diagnosed with cancer back in 2008 and been drinking this every day after going through my treatments. Been cancer-free since 2010 and my doctor swears that if he hadn't treated me he wouldn't believe I had cancer.

-Jim

I've been loving my oregano infused olive oil and am looking forward to using the rosemary next! Good medicine! Mullein, dandelion, cleavers, and nettle tea for me!

-Penny